

know why the Federal Government does not seem to get it. Mr. Speaker, this ought not to be. We have to deal with this immigration issue as a body, set a plan, and enforce the law.

URGING JOHN BOLTON TO WITHDRAW HIS NAME FROM CONSIDERATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, this morning's Washington Post reported that President Bush's choice to the United Nations, Ambassador John Bolton, made a false statement to Congress, stating on a written questionnaire that he had not been questioned in recent years by investigators in an official inquiry.

In fact, the State Department acknowledged yesterday that Mr. Bolton had been interviewed on July 18, 2003, by the State Department's Inspector General about possible Iraqi attempts to procure uranium from Niger. Mr. Bolton stated he did not recall the Inspector General's inquiry and his form was inaccurate in this regard and that he will correct the form.

Mr. Speaker, with all the attention given to the leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity, it seems to me that it is almost inconceivable that an event that important could inadvertently be overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, this revelation comes on the heels of a barrage of negative reports about Mr. Bolton from those who work most closely with him. It has become apparent, as members of his own parties have spoken and have very serious concerns about his temperament and his integrity to fill one of the most important positions in some of the most important times in our history.

The time has come for Mr. Bolton to voluntarily withdraw his name from consideration to be United States Ambassador to the U.N. Members of both bodies have urged his defeat, and I commend a Republican Senator from Ohio who passionately said that he is the wrong person at the wrong time.

As a member of the House Committee on International Relations and a congressional representative to the United Nations, I believe that there are many excellent candidates that President Bush could choose for this critical position.

Again, I urge John Bolton to do the honorable thing and withdraw. Our Nation is bigger than an individual. Our Nation's needs supersede that of an individual. At this time we need the best and the brightest, one who will unite and gather support for our Nation in a strong, clear, but diplomatic way.

I ask Mr. Bolton to do the right thing for our wonderful Nation and offer his withdrawal.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, an ominous threat looms over the security of America today, and I stand in this well to ask responsiveness from this body to the situation at our borders, which today still remain unsecured. My home State of Arizona has become a gateway to the Nation for drugs, syndicated crime, and arms and sex trafficking; and they are intrinsically related to illegal immigration.

In 2004 in Cochise County, Arizona alone, over 235,000 people were apprehended by the border patrol after they crossed the border illegally. The border patrol estimates that three to four people cross the border undetected for every person that they apprehend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to do the math. By conservative estimates, over 700,000 people crossed into this country illegally last year who were not apprehended. This is through Cochise County, Arizona alone, one county in Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, our first priority related to our borders should be first to protect them against terrorists with chemical, biological, or even nuclear materials. We do not know who the thousands of people are that stream across our unsecured borders every day. We do not know what they are bringing into this country with them. We do know that members of the MS-13 gang have been apprehended entering this country illegally.

The MS-13 gang, Mr. Speaker, from South America are professed friends of al Qaeda. And for these reasons alone, we cannot allow our borders to remain unsecured. This is an unacceptable level of national security risk in a post-9/11 world.

Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of the Federal Government to protect our borders; and, sir, we are failing that duty.

In response to government ineffectiveness, individuals have organized themselves into citizen watch and border patrol groups, and this is at great sacrifice to themselves. There is something seriously wrong in this country when America's grandmothers feel compelled to sit at the border with binoculars to report illegal activity to authorities.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a significant day in which we live. It is a dangerous world in which we live. And an unsecured American border risks a disaster of catastrophic scope. We are jeopardizing everything we hold in our hearts dear: our families, our friends, and the American way of life itself. We must take action to secure our borders now before this Nation again finds itself heart broken by tragedy and those of us in this body are left trying to explain to the American people why we did not do all that could have been done to prevent it.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2361) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2985) "An Act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes."

THE WAY FORWARD IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our country is facing a difficult, even desperate, situation in Iraq with an insurgency that seems to be gaining strength, a reconstruction effort that is lagging, and an international coalition that is deteriorating.

President Bush seems determined to put the best face on the situation, but the American people are increasingly pessimistic and distrustful of what they hear. We are overdue for a major course correction. It is my intent today to make the case for such a correction and to outline what its major elements should be.

What are our objectives in Iraq? A careful reading of the President's Fort Bragg speech of June 28 reveals a shift of emphasis, from standing up an independently functioning democracy to preventing Iraq from becoming a basing point for international terrorism. That is ironic, for most analysts, including the 9/11 Commission, agree that the Iraqi regime had no discernable link to the perpetrators of 9/11. It is our invasion and its chaotic aftermath that have attracted al Qaeda and other international terrorists to Iraq.

In any event, by whatever definition of the American mission one chooses, our effort is falling short, dangerously short, of what it will take for Iraq to achieve self-rule and the capability of self-defense and for the American occupation to end.

The news of recent days leaves little doubt that the insurgency, which Vice President CHENEY described as in its "last throes," is anything but. In the last 2 weeks, insurgent attacks have intensified again, killing more than 200 people in Baghdad and towns to the

south. Last weekend we read of gunmen ambushing a wedding party, killing the bride and wounding the groom, apparently because of his Iraqi army affiliation—a heart-wrenching account that underscores the insurgents' brutality and their continuing ability to launch lethal attacks.

General Abizaid, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, recently acknowledged that the insurgency has not diminished. In fact, estimates of the number of hardcore insurgents now range from 20,000 to 40,000, up from original U.S. estimates of 5,000. Attacks now average 70 per day, up from 25 per day 1 year ago. And car bombs average 135 per month, up from an average of 20 per month last summer.

We are getting better at identifying potential attacks. Only 25 percent of car bomb attacks are now successful compared to 90 percent last year. But while we have been able to reduce the insurgents' success rates threefold, they have increased the number of attacks sixfold. So the number of lethal attacks has actually doubled over the last year.

How far have the Iraqi police, security forces, and officer corps come toward being able to secure the countryside and control terrorists and criminal activity? "About half of Iraq's new police battalions are still being established and cannot conduct operations, while the other half of the police units and two-thirds of the new army battalions are only 'partially capable' of carrying out counterinsurgency missions, and only with American help, according to a newly declassified Pentagon assessment" the New York Times reports.

The administration claims that approximately 170,000 Iraqis have been trained to assume security responsibilities. U.S. commanders in Iraq have stated that the training is limited, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Myers has publicly said that only about 40,000 are fully capable of deploying anywhere in Iraq. Other estimates go as low as 10,000 Iraqi security forces that are actually trained and capable of performing their security responsibilities.

The equipping of these forces is also deficient. According to the Brookings Institution, the Iraqis only have 42 percent of required weapons, 24 percent of required vehicles, 19 percent of required communications equipment, and 29 percent of required body armor. The Iraqis are not now ready to provide their own national security, handle civil policing duties, or deal with the continuing and strong insurgency, nor will they be ready in the near future.

What is the state of the reconstruction of Iraq? Successful reconstruction is critical to gaining the support of the Iraqi people and denying the insurgents the benefits of widespread popular discontent. We have made substantial headway in rebuilding bridges, roads, and railways; in rehabilitating the seaport of Umm Qasr, and installing and repairing telecommunications infra-

structure both inside of Baghdad and for the international satellite gateway system.

Despite these efforts, we have a long way to go. Nationwide, Iraq is only generating 75 percent of its electricity production goal and the nation only has an average of 12 hours of electricity per day. Oil production has barely reached 80 percent of its pre-war levels, and Iraqis are experiencing gas lines up to a mile long. Iraqi government sources cited in the Pentagon's report of July 21, 2005, put the unemployment rate at 28 percent, up from 22.5 percent 6 months ago. Most independent estimates of unemployment are closer to 40 percent.

The top five problems Iraqis identified in an April, 2005, IRI survey are inadequate electricity, unemployment, health care, crime, and national security, all significant indicators of major reconstruction needs.

□ 1315

Are we on schedule for getting an Iraqi Constitution adopted and a legitimate, broadly representative government established? The National Assembly is to draft a Constitution by August 15, 2005, to be put to a national vote by October 15. On May 10, the National Assembly appointed a 55-member committee to begin drafting the permanent Constitution. The committee missed its own deadline to produce a preliminary draft by July 15. However, several working drafts have surfaced that have sparked serious complaints regarding constriction of the rights of women and a strict interpretation of Islam as a source of legislation.

Despite these conflicts and the missing of the self-imposed deadline, Iraqi leaders say that a draft will be completed by the August 15 deadline. Six subcommittees are working on specific issues of the new Constitution, including the thorny questions of Kurdish autonomy and the role of Islam in law. Many other contentious issues remain to be negotiated. There is a provision for a 6-month drafting extension if the Assembly cannot complete a draft by the specified deadline, but exercising this extension would delay all subsequent stages of the transition.

Given the enormity of the task we face in Iraq, what is the condition of the Coalition of the Willing on which our efforts depend? The coalition has always been a pale imitation of the one the first President Bush assembled for the first Iraq war. For Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. share of overall troop numbers has never been less than 84 percent. And now the coalition is deteriorating further. Spain's troop commitment has gone from 1,300 to zero. Italy's 3,120 troops will go to zero by early next year, as will Poland's 1,500. Other countries that have withdrawn their forces or are in the process of doing so include Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Hungary, Moldova, the Netherlands, New Zea-

land, Nicaragua, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Thailand, Tonga, and Ukraine. In most cases, these withdrawals have taken place amid overwhelming public opposition in these countries to the war.

Troop contingents of 12,000 from the United Kingdom and 2,800 from South Korea remain, but this war and occupation have mainly had an American face, and that has become more and more the case as erstwhile allies have fallen away. American troops strength now stands at about 135,000, and many say that is not sufficient to complete the mission unless the training of Iraqis can be greatly accelerated. American casualties number 13,657, including 1,790 deaths. Of these, 1,653 deaths have occurred since President Bush landed on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln to proclaim major combat operations successfully concluded.

While there is no definitive source of information, we know that the human toll in Iraq is enormous. Estimates of noncombatant Iraqi deaths have reached 25,000, and the Pentagon reports that Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) combat deaths have now exceeded 2,000.

As for the budget impact, outlays for Iraq operations are now about \$1 billion per week. The cumulative cost of the Iraq war, occupation, and reconstruction has already exceeded \$200 billion.

In the face of all this, the American public's confidence is waning. This is not because Americans are cowed by the challenge we face in Iraq. Fully 57 percent in the NBC News-Wall Street Journal poll of July 11 said it was important that America "maintain its military and economic commitment there until Iraq is able to fully govern and police itself." But the public is increasingly skeptical of President Bush's rationale for going to war. They are doubtful that the administration has a plan for success, and they wonder if they are being told the truth by our country's leaders. More than half say they do not think the war was "worth it." Only 40 percent say the Iraq war has made us safer from terrorism; 54 percent say less safe. Nearly 60 percent now disapprove of the job President Bush is doing in Iraq. This has helped drive his overall disapproval rating to 56 percent.

The President's June 28 speech was widely anticipated as an opportunity for the Commander in Chief to give an honest assessment of progress to date and to chart a realistic and compelling course going forward. The setting of the speech, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was well chosen, giving the President the opportunity to express the admiration and the gratitude we all feel "to our servicemen and women across the globe . . . for [their] courage under fire and service to our Nation," and for the sacrifices of their families as well.

In other respects, however, the speech was a disappointment, offering

neither a candid assessment nor a specific strategy for success. The President spoke of “significant progress,” while glossing over the state of the insurgency and ignoring the falling off of international support. He furnished fewer details than I have already given in this presentation this afternoon. He offered no benchmarks by which success might be measured or his administration might be held accountable. He was defensive about past decisions and oblivious to the obvious need for course correction. As others have observed, he exposed the weakness of his arguments by rhetorically falling back on 9/11, despite the lack of any significant al Qaeda connection to prewar Iraq.

The President asked Americans to stay the course, to continue to pay the heavy price of this war, without holding up his end of the bargain. He and his administration owe these brave men and women in uniform and, indeed, all Americans more than glib assurances and exhortations to steadfastness. He owes all of us a plan for success, for turning Iraq over to the Iraqis, avoiding a reversion to tyranny or chaos, and terminating the American occupation.

The President’s speech has now been improved on somewhat by the Department of the Defense’s congressionally mandated report, “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” dated July 21, 2005. The report states, “The criteria for withdrawing coalition forces from Iraq are conditions-based, not calendar-based. The development of the Iraqi Security Forces to a level at which they can take over primary responsibility for their own security is the threshold condition. ISF development in turn will be helped by progress in political, economic, and other areas.”

This is only slightly more specific than the standard suggested in the President’s speech, “As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.”

Only in limited instances does the report measure present performance against a defined goal, much less specify the conditions under which American responsibility can be scaled back. Moreover, the Pentagon almost always chooses the more optimistic among analysts’ conclusions as to conditions in Iraq and apparently sees no need to defend those choices. Congress has required that this report be updated every 90 days. Our leaders should insist that future reports meet a higher standard of candor and of relevance to future policy choices.

The coherence of administration policy was thrown further into doubt this week by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, General George Casey, in their comments reported from Baghdad. Rumsfeld, who last month suggested that the insurgency might last as many as 10 to 12 years, displayed a new urgency about moving the constitutional process and the training of security personnel along. Meanwhile,

General Casey emerged from a meeting with Rumsfeld and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalizad to declare that “fairly substantial reductions” in U.S. troop levels might be possible by next spring and summer.

That may be a tantalizing prospect politically, but the Pentagon owes the Congress and the public an accounting of the conditions that must be met, and how they are to be met, in order for such a policy to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge of Iraq calls for leadership of a high order, leadership that is determined and confident, but does not mistake confidence for rigidity, or does not mistake determination for an unwillingness to acknowledge and learn from past mistakes.

The Bush administration’s Iraq policy has been plagued by far too many misjudgments and mistakes, and it would compound those mistakes to fail to learn from them now. We went to war with defective intelligence on the threat posed by Iraq, evidence selectively and sometimes misleadingly presented to Congress and the public. We went to war virtually unilaterally with too few allies and unwarranted disdain for the United Nations’ program of weapons inspection and destruction. We went to war with unrealistic expectations as to how our occupation would be received, and with grossly deficient postwar planning. We undertook a war of choice, allowing ourselves to be diverted from the war on terrorism and other more dangerous international challenges, and foregoing other means for containing and controlling whatever threat Saddam Hussein represented.

Our current situation in Iraq bears the marks of these past mistakes, and I believe history will judge George Bush and his administration harshly for them. In much of this, Congress was complicit, and I am even more convinced than I was on the day I cast my “no” vote that this body abdicated its responsibility when it gave the President, months in advance, open-ended authority to invade Iraq. But, while we must learn from the past, we must face resolutely forward. That means transcending past grievances, rethinking past positions, confronting the unvarnished truth as to our present situation, and weighing our realistic options.

What alternative possibilities, in fact, lay before us? The President has proposed more of the same: persevere on our present course, despite abundant evidence that we are falling short. Others are urging unilateral withdrawal of American forces, some say on a preannounced, fixed timetable. More and more politicians and commentators are expressing this view. They point out that the presence of American troops is not only challenging the insurgency, but also fueling it. Our alien “infidel” presence is itself a rallying point for Iraqi insurgents and international terrorists. Moreover,

some argue, Iraqis will be more likely to assume responsibility for assembling a workable government and developing their own security forces if they know that their dependence on U.S. troops is coming to an end.

These arguments have merit, but they underestimate factors beyond the American military presence that are feeding the insurgency and could plunge Iraq into a civil war, or even the conditions of a failed state, after we are gone. They also underestimate the danger of encouraging our enemies to wait us out and then to strike with devastating force.

There is, I believe, a better way. We should indeed signal clearly that we intend ultimately to bring our troops home, that we expect the Iraq Government to assume responsibility for the country’s security, and that we have no plans for permanent bases or an ongoing military presence. But we should also put forward a strategy for success—a plan for course correction in Iraq, for recognizing and correcting policies that are not working, and for moving Iraq decisively towards self-defense and self-rule.

A strategy for success requires benchmarks by which we can measure progress and hold our own government accountable. One useful formulation was suggested by the House minority leader as an amendment to the fiscal year 2006 defense appropriations bill, but was, unfortunately, denied a vote by the Republican leadership. The amendment would have required the timely submission by the President to the Congress of a report specifying:

“(1) the criteria for assessing the capabilities and readiness of Iraqi security forces; goals for achieving appropriate capability and readiness levels for such forces, as well as for recruiting, training, and equipping such forces, and the milestones and timetable for achieving such goals.

□ 1330

“(2) The estimated total number of Iraqi personnel trained at [these] levels . . . needed for Iraqi security forces to perform duties currently being undertaken by United States and coalition forces, including defending Iraq’s borders and providing adequate levels of law and order throughout Iraq.

“(3) The number of United States and coalition advisors needed to support Iraqi security forces and associated ministries.

“(4) The measures of political stability for Iraq, including the important political milestones to be achieved over the next several years.”

I would augment this list with benchmarks and goals for the reconstruction effort and for the involving of allies and multilateral organizations.

What of the other ingredients of a strategy for success? Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, gave a wide-ranging speech on June 21 that stressed the need to take advantage of

legitimate foreign offers to help Iraqi security forces and to share responsibility for Iraqi reconstruction internationally.

Egypt has offered to train Iraqi police. The Jordanians have offered advanced military training for the officer corps. Even the French have offered to train 1,500 paramilitary police in France and send them back to Iraq. NATO is establishing an ISF training mission, and the alliance and its member states should be encouraged to do more. Senator BIDEN, for example, has proposed a small NATO force dedicated to border patrol and protection.

We must have an ongoing crash course in the training and equipping of Iraqi police, security forces, and the officer corps. And the Bush administration should be far more aggressive in enlisting international partners in these efforts.

The same goes for Iraqi political development and reconstruction. The Pentagon's July 21 report commends United Nations support of the constitutional development process and assistance in preparing for approaching referenda and elections. Recent international donors' conferences in Brussels on June 22 and Amman on July 18 made only limited progress in securing financing for Iraqi reconstruction and economic development.

Most of the effort was aimed at getting donors to follow through on the approximately \$33 billion pledged in 2003 in Madrid. Many potential donors conditioned future support on improvements in the security situation.

Unfortunately, both the military and the reconstruction efforts continue to bear the marks of the Bush administration's early unilateralism. This must be overcome, as a matter of burden sharing and of ensuring the legitimacy and eventual success of the effort.

Our reconstruction programs should have a steady focus on improving the lives of ordinary Iraqis. This will often require us to emphasize smaller-scale projects that have an immediate local impact, and/or that mainly employ Iraqis.

It also means we should continue to provide reconstruction funds directly to our midlevel military officers. The Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) provided for the disbursement in fiscal year 2004 of \$549 million by U.S. commanders at the tactical level. Many Members of this body have returned from visits to Iraq, as I did from Kirkuk, impressed by the education and health facilities and the other projects these funds have made possible, with a minimum of red tape, and the trust and good will they have generated.

Among the worthwhile Iraqi projects sponsored by the U.S. Agency For International Development, I am particularly familiar with the local government and civil society work of North Carolina-based RTI International.

These projects have been forced to use a substantial portion of their fund-

ing to provide security, and some efforts have succumbed in a hostile environment. Yet RTI staff, many of them Iraqis, have helped establish representative and accountable governments in many localities and are currently implementing a training and management program for 150 model health care centers in Iraq. This is difficult but important work, and it deserves our continuing support.

In the midst of the challenges in Iraq, and the course correction we must undertake there, it is critical that we not lose sight of related undertakings in the region with a direct bearing on our prospects in Iraq. I will here mention only Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Over the past 3 years, the Afghan mission, directly related to 9/11 and to the denial of a support structure or sanctuary to al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, has suffered by virtue of the President's initial fixation on Iraq and the human and material resources required by Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar remain at large. And it has often fallen to this Congress to augment administration budget requests for Afghanistan.

The Taliban has managed to partially reconstitute itself in recent months. Insurgent attacks and government offenses since March have killed more than 800 in Afghanistan. The obvious intent at present is to disrupt the September 18 parliamentary elections, a critical step in Afghanistan's political development.

In Afghanistan more than in Iraq, however, U.S. troops have the benefit of international assistance. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has operated under NATO command since August 2003, providing security and supporting nation-building activities.

The ISAF currently numbers about 8,800 troops from 26 NATO and 11 non-NATO partner countries, including Canada, Spain, France and Germany, all noticeably missing from Iraq.

The provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), military-led groups that secure enclaves for the work of reconstruction, aid, and Afghanistan interior ministry personnel, also display increasing international participation. Of the 21 now in operation, 11 PRTs are U.S.-run, 10 are run by partner countries, and several U.S. teams are slated for takeover by NATO/ISAF forces.

The Kabul government is still far from exercising effective authority throughout Afghanistan, and the Taliban and other enemy forces are displaying a disturbing resilience. Our Afghan mission is under severe challenge. We must not again be diverted.

We must also expand the mission's international character and apply the lessons of multilateralism in Afghanistan to Iraq.

Also critical to a strategy for success is determined U.S. diplomacy aimed at

the two-state solution President Bush has advocated for the Middle East. The immediate challenge is to make certain the evacuation of Israeli settlers from Gaza undertaken by Prime Minister Sharon comes off successfully and peacefully, despite predictable attempts at sabotage from extremists on both sides.

This will require redoubled Palestinian efforts to rein in terrorist groups and prevent attacks against Israeli troops and communities. The Israelis must give such efforts a chance and work with the Palestinian Authority to coordinate the logistics of the withdrawal and the freedom of movement in and out of Gaza after the withdrawal.

Longer term, the parties must follow the path of mutual accommodation outlined in the Road Map, eventually undertaking final status negotiations. "Gaza First" must not become "Gaza Last." But none of this will be easy, and it is unlikely to move forward without skillful and persistent U.S. diplomacy.

The peace process has languished for 4 years, partially because of the disengagement of President Bush and his administration. This has been terribly costly to the Israelis and the Palestinians, who have endured 4 years of dashed hopes and recurring violence. But it has also been damaging to American interests in the region.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict fuels extremism and anti-American attitudes across the Middle East. It greatly complicates our prospects for success in Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has signaled that the second term will be different. To her credit, she returned to Israel and the West Bank last week as violent attacks escalated dangerously—a suicide bombing, rocket attacks, retaliatory air attacks—and Israeli tanks were lining up at the Gaza border.

It is extremely important that she and the President stay the course, understanding that Israeli-Palestinian peace-making, important in its own right, is also critical to any strategy for success in the region.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has been terribly costly in terms of lives, resources, and our country's diplomatic and security interests. Our challenge now is not merely to cut our losses, but to extricate ourselves in such a way that prevents Iraq from reverting to tyranny or chaos, that denies a basing point to international terrorism, and that leaves the country intact, able to defend and govern itself.

We are not now on course to achieve this objective. The Bush administration neither has a strategy for success nor even acknowledges the need for course correction. We must do better. And it is the duty of this Congress to demand candor, accountability, and a strategy calibrated to achieve our goals.

We must have an honest accounting of the state of the insurgency, the

readiness of Iraq forces, the progress of the country's reconstruction and political development, and the extent of international collaboration and support.

Where there are deficiencies, and the deficiencies are serious in all of these areas, the administration must provide benchmarks by which success can be measured and a plan specifying what it will take to reach our goals.

Glib reassurances from the President are dangerous, postponing and preventing corrective action and opening wider the credibility gap with the American public.

Those who commit troops to battle on behalf of this great country owe them and us an intelligent and realistic plan to succeed.

Members of this body should demand such a plan and a frequent, truthful accounting of our success in reaching its goals from the President and his administration. A midcourse correction in Iraq is worthy of our Nation's best efforts, and the window of opportunity is closing.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire how much time the gentleman has on his hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). The gentleman has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Would the gentleman be willing to yield me the remainder of his time?

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to yield the remainder of the time.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, should I just ask for unanimous consent since there are no other Members present in the Chamber?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The minority leader may reallocate the leadership hour.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to do that, to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 26 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise because what the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), my friend, has said is terribly important to be said. And what is even more important is that it be made available to the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, appropriate, to inform the gentleman and the rest of the Congress who may not be aware that the elements of the strategy for success, the identical language which the minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), has requested in the form of an amendment, has actually been included in an appropriations bill, the

Iraq supplemental appropriations bill, passed earlier this year.

That language was included in an amendment that I submitted to the Iraq supplemental bill. It also included the benchmarks that the gentleman has suggested, as well as even more specific information. We have received that report on the strategy for success, Mr. Speaker.

The most important elements of that report, in fact though, were included in an addendum which was classified. And so I and those who have seen the report are not at liberty to give the kind of specific information that at least I feel should be shared with the American public.

But I would like to address what was in the body of the report, which does in part respond to the very specific questions, as to Iraq's military capability, its economic viability, and its political stability.

The American people need to know whether in fact Iraq will ever be able to fully control its borders and provide security for its society and its economy. And we need to know how successful we have been in training and equipping Iraqi forces, because we have been working at that for more than 2 years.

The American people also need to know what has happened to the tens of billions of dollars that we have appropriated for economic reconstruction.

□ 1345

Will Iraq ever be or is even close to being economically viable? Is its physical infrastructure in place so that its economy can rebound in a way that will provide economic opportunities for its population?

The American people also need to know, in addition to where Iraq is in terms of military capabilities and economic viability, how stable its government can ever be and at what point will the decisionmakers, the policymakers in Washington decide that its governance is stable enough to be able to return Iraq over to a democracy that is worthy of our military efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this war. I voted against it. I voted against most of the funding for it. I did vote for the Iraq supplemental because it included this language that I felt was vitally important, requiring what, while we do not call it an exit strategy, is certainly appropriately entitled "a strategy for success." That language was included and could only have been included if it was offered in a bipartisan, non-political context, without a whole lot of fanfare. But working with the majority we could get some answers to the questions that the American people, our constituents, are asking. We did not have those questions answered when we went to war.

I opposed the war because I felt that it was unjustified. I knew that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with the attacks on 9/11. Suggestions to the contrary were a ruse. The reasons given were at best unjustified; at worst, deliberately deceptive.

I also opposed it because as our senior military officers will tell you we ought not go to war without a plan to win the peace. We had no plan to win the peace. And, in fact, the 41st President of the United States, George Bush, when he had the opportunity to go into Baghdad and take out Saddam when we had Saddam's Republican Guard on the run, he chose not to do so because his advisors, understanding the country, acting with foresight and knowledge of the political context within the Middle East, were afraid that we would be thrust into the role of an occupier. And they knew, and I think were absolutely right, that the United States should never be playing the role of an occupier, but always that of a liberator. So they chose not to go to Baghdad. The son chose differently with very different people advising him, and I think for different reasons.

But now that we are in Iraq, what do we do? That is what senior military officers are asking us. And it is certainly what the mothers and fathers of the young men and women who are fighting this war are demanding to know. They need to know what is our strategy. How long will we be there? How much more money is absolutely necessary to continue this military engagement? And they are getting none of those answers.

Unfortunately, I cannot disclose any of the specific information that has now been provided, but I certainly can share, at least with my constituents, the fact that in my judgment we are nowhere near being able to withdraw a substantial number of our troops in a responsible manner because, in my judgment, the Iraqi military is nowhere near being able to secure its borders. The Iraqi police forces are nowhere near being able to restore law and order in that country. The economic infrastructure is nowhere near being able to support a viable economy. And even the government is nowhere near being able to pass a Constitution that not just would be acceptable to the American people who have sacrificed so much to bring it about, but it is not even in the situation where it would be enduring and accepted by the vast majority of the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a quagmire here. We need answers. We need answers from the people who put us in that quagmire. It is wrong to continue to be sending troops to a war that is this unwinnable, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I suspect what is going to happen, and it was further confirmed yesterday by the Secretary and by some of the senior military officers who have been in a consultation with them, that we will start a substantial withdrawal. But I think that withdrawal, I feel that withdrawal will be motivated more for political reasons than for military or foreign policy reasons. We have our fist in the middle of a beehive, and we are getting stung. The advisors that sent us there are not getting stung because they figure they can say or do anything