economic development that specifically allows the types of takings that prior to Kelo had achieved a consensus as to their appropriateness. I want to mention some of these.

These exceptions include: Exceptions for the transfer of property to public ownership, to common carriers and public utilities, and for related things like pipelines. I mentioned that earlier.

The bill also makes reasonable exceptions for the taking of land that is being used in a way that constitutes an immediate threat to public health and safety. Of course. That is common sense.

The bill also makes exceptions for the merely incidental use of a public building by a private entity, such as a small privately run gift shop on the ground floor in a public hospital, or the acquisition of abandoned property, and for clearing defective chains of title in which no one can be said to really own the property in the first place.

A good bill, Mr. Speaker. I commend it to my colleagues. H.R. 4128 was introduced by the gentleman from Wisconsin on October 25 of this year. The bill was reported from the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 27 to 3 on October 27, 2005; and I can assure my colleagues that there are not 27 Republican Members of the Judiciary Committee. We have a majority, yes, but a narrow majority. So, clearly, this bill has strong, strong bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this time that we have taken to talk tonight about this situation of the abuse of the power of eminent domain is so critical. It is so critical, and this bill is so important. We need balance. Certainly we need economic development. We need to develop blighted areas in our cities across these States, but we can do it in the right way. And we do not need to violate someone's constitutional and God-given rights of life, liberty and property.

I hope that we have in this time, Mr. Speaker, made a strong case for this. I know my colleagues who spoke earlier spoke well, spoke eloquently, and I am deeply appreciative of their spending a little of their evening tonight to discuss such an important issue. We look forward to Thursday. We look forward to the passage of H.R. 4128 to restore the natural and constitutional right to property.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is an honor to come before the House. We want to thank not only Democratic leadership but everyone within the Democratic Caucus for coming to this floor night after night in a fight for what is right in America and to make sure that we work as much as we can in a bipartisan way to bring about the best of America. We have to fight for that position.

A lot has happened today, Mr. Speaker, in the Capitol. A lot has happened in the capital city in the last days. A lot will happen in the days to come. And it is how we move from this point on. If we are willing to travel the road of bipartisanship, carrying out oversight, making sure that our country is being told the truth, making sure that our troops are being told the truth, making sure that we as a Congress do what we are supposed to do constitutionally for the American people, then I believe that our future will be bright.

□ 2100

Or there is another road that could be traveled and has been traveled upon quite a bit in the 109th Congress, the road of strict partisanship, abusing the rules of the House to extend votes even when the majority is not winning so that they can win even though the ideas may not be in the best interest, in many cases, of the reason why we came to the floor in the first place, i.e., the energy bill, the prescription drug bill, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Also on that road is the road of cronyism, the culture of corruption and cronyism; and I think it is something that we need to disabuse ourselves of and move on the road of bipartisanship, move on the road of cooperation, move on the road of leveling with the American people.

So we do have a choice. There is a fork. Unfortunately, I would say that just picking up the paper, Mr. Speaker, just looking at the news, it looks like the majority has taken the fork of partisanship, endorsing the culture of corruption and cronyism. I want to make sure I am clear when I say culture of corruption and cronyism: A, condoning it, not calling Federal agencies, the executive branch, and some legislative branch operations or on the floor or before committee when we see this activity taking place.

Cronyism: a perfect example, Mr. Speaker, as I stand here now, Mr. Michael Brown still enjoys full salary at FEMA even after the debacle of Katrina, admitted by the administration, admitted by many Members of this House; but he still enjoys full salary of the taxpayers' dollars, $148,000-and-change. The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security has endorsed his extension by saying that we can learn from Michael Brown.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot wait until Secretary Brown comes before the Homeland Security Committee, because I have one question: What benefit to the taxpayers of the United States does Michael Brown have or possess as it relates to his experiences from Katrina? Did we not already have 60 days of a contract that was extended and then 30 days more extension of the contract? Mr. Speaker, I ask the colleagues of the House and level-minded Members of goodwill to please answer the Department of Homeland Security, to save the taxpayers' money, and turn their back on cronyism in the Federal Government.

Today I am joined once again by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and also the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN); and we come to the floor, as the Members know, Mr. Speaker, week after week and now night after night, to not only bring to the Members but to the American people what we are doing and also what we are doing wrong. But it just seems like the wrong is overwhelming, and we feel it is our obligation to bring it to the attention of the Members and the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

It is a pleasure to join him once again, and we appreciate Leader PELOSI's giving us this opportunity to talk about the issues that are important not just to our generation but to the citizens of this country who really need to hear both sides of the story, which they are most definitely not hearing from now.

And the gentleman mentioned the extension of Brownie's contract. I was struck by the fact when we learned that, and I think we just learned that last week, that his contract was extended ostensibly to glean more advice from him on what the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA should be doing in the aftermath of hurricanes. And we are still, unfortunately, in the middle of hurricane season. Our respective districts were just struck by Hurricane Wilma, and one of the things that we have learned in the aftermath of Wilma now is that it has really become clear that the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA have learned nothing from the aftermath of Katrina, the blown aftermath of Katrina, and then Rita and then from Rita to Wilma.

Communication failures, an inability of our cities to get generators to run their lift stations, sewage backing up in the streets, gaping holes in condominiums and mobile homes. It is pouring rain today in south Florida, which is pouring more misery on top of people who have already been through so much. And how does Secretary Chertoff respond? He extends Michael Brown's contract by 30 days. This is a person who President Bush ultimately was forced to admit was not able to handle a job the size of Hurricane Katrina and her aftermath, so much so that essentially he was forced out.

But now, because they are so married to the cronyism, the culture of corruption and cronyism and the lack of competence runs so deep and they are so unwilling to give it up and to admit that they are incorrect that they give him an extension and continue to pay

him $148,000 a year. This is what they are rewarding. They reward incompetence. They thrive on cronyism and corruption and unethical behavior. It is just unbelievable.

I think this is a good time to turn to our first chart here, if the gentleman is ready to do that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I was looking at the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and looking at those charts over there. They are so breathtaking.

And turning over to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), we were working very hard over the last weeks or so dealing with Wilma, the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. INSLEE) has joined us tonight, who has so much to add to this conversation.

I will give the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) the honors of recognizing someone else who has joined us here on the floor.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, my good friend and mentor, Congressman DELAHUNT, is also here to help us explain how. This man was a prosecutor, a district attorney in the great State of Massachusetts. So he understands exactly what, I think, we are going to go through here. And he volunteered his services. This is the kind of gentleman that we are dealing with here, to come down and help us kind of walk through this.

We are going to lay out for the American people tonight exactly what has been going on here with the CIA leak, and we have all of these examples, and we have had example after example after example over the past year of different reasons, really, quite frankly, since the war, about what has been going on and how this administration has misled the Congress and misled the American people. So we kind of want to go through chronologically exactly what has been happening.

I am going to take a couple minutes here just to walk through this and lay the foundation. We are going to actually have the next hour as well; so we are going to have some time to go through, but I think it is important, as we have all talked about already, to let the American people know exactly what has been happening.

Now, this was President Bush's original promise when he was the Governor of Texas. He was running for the Presidency of the United States. He said, ''In my administration we will ask not only what is legal but what is right, not just what the lawyers allow but what the public deserves.''

So this President came in with a pretty high standard of how he wanted his administration to run, and we all respected the President for that. I remember his saying and the Vice President saying time and time again, We are going to bring honor and dignity to the White House.

We see where he got it, from his father, who was a very good man. This is his talking about former CIA head talking about leaks: ''I have nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the name of our sources. They are, in my view, the most insidious of traitors.'' That is President 41.

Former Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie, who might as well be the Chair of the committee that heads up the Katrina investigation because it is so partisan, this is what he said when he was asked on ''Hardball'' with Chris Matthews: ''I think if the allegation'' of the CIA leak ''is true, to reveal the identity of an undercover CIA operative, it's abhorrent and it should be a crime, and it is a crime.''

And Chris Matthews said: ''It'd be worse than Watergate, wouldn't it?''

And Gillespie said: ''Yeah. I suppose in terms of the real-world implications of it. It's not just politics.''

So first President Bush, Ed Gillespie. The President came into office. He was from Texas. He did not want Potomac fever. He was going to bring a fresh, new approach to Washington. Then once the leak stuff starting coming out, he says now: ''If somebody committed a crime, they will no longer work in my administration.''

And that is true. The original person now, Scooter Libby, who has been indicted for perjury, false statements, and obstruction of justice, has resigned. So that is good. The President's original statement said that ''if anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would no longer be in this administration.''

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, could you read that again, sir?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. ''If anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would no longer be in this administration.'' That is what the President said. That is not what Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. MEEK, Mr. RYAN said. The President of the United States said that. So now we are basically saying that this President said if anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would be out.

So let us see what actually happens here. This is from the indictment, quoted from the indictment: ''On or about July 10 or July 11, 2003,'' Scooter ''Libby spoke to a senior official in the White House, Official A.'' Now, we have come to know that Official A is actually Karl Rove. Official A has now been outed as Karl Rove, ''who advised Libby of a conversation Official A had earlier in the week with columnist Robert Novak in which Wilson's wife was discussed as a CIA employee involved in Wilson's trip. Libby was advised by Rove, ''Official A'' in the indictment ''that Novak would be writing a story about Wilson's wife.''

That is from count one, obstruction of justice, in the indictment of Scooter Libby. Remember the date, July 10, middle of the summer.

Now, Karl Rove, a couple of years ago, in September of 2003, the fall, a couple months later, the end of September, September 24, to ABC News producer Andrea Owen, when she asked: ''Did you have any knowledge or did you leak the name of the CIA agent to the press?'' Karl Rove said no. In July, in the indictment, he is the one talking to Scooter Libby about Novak using it in the article. That is a lie. He lied to the American people on ABC News.

Asked again, Rove revises his answer. This is in July 4 of 2005, just this past summer: ''I'll repeat what I said to ABC News when this whole thing broke some number of months ago. I didn't know her name, and I didn't leak her name.''

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me because in between these two charts or slides, I want to tell my colleagues what I saw when I was watching ''Good Morning America'' yesterday morning, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2115

Matt Cooper, the Time Magazine reporter who was one of the reporters involved in all of this and testified in front of the grand jury and initially resisted in terms of his willingness to testify, had an exchange with Charles Gibson on Good Morning America yesterday.

Matt Cooper acknowledged, in questioning from Mr. Gibson, that he initially heard from Karl Rove about the identity of Joe Wilson's wife and what she did for a living. Charles Gibson in this exchange said, ''So, you, I am sure, will likely be called to testify at Mr. Libby's trial, and will you be testifying to those facts?'' In other words, he asked will you be testifying that you initially heard about Joe Wilson's wife's profession and what she did and her identity from Karl Rove? And he said, ''Well, that is the truth, and I plan on testifying about what I know.''

Then Charles Gibson asked Matt Cooper, ''Is there any possibility that you are not correct?'' Because, you know, Mr. Cooper, the other side will say, opposing counsel will try to say that perhaps you are mistaken or you misunderstood or there was some matter of clarity, lack of clarity on your part. He said, ''Well, I was taking notes during this conversation, and I am pretty clear. I am going to go in and testify to what I was told.''

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, so Cooper is going to say that Rove told him.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, Cooper is going to say at trial, if asked, that Karl Rove was the first person to tell him Valerie Plame's identity.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wow.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thought that was important.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is very important. That is huge. Here we are, in the indictment he knows in July. In September of 2003, a couple of months after he had already known and told Libby, he denies it to the American people. He lies about it. In Washington, you know, you misrepresent, you mislead. In Ohio, you lie. We tend in the Beltway here, people who get ''Potomac fever'' tend to soften it up like it is kind of okay. In Ohio this is a lie. So Karl Rove lied to the American people.

Now, not only did he lie to the American people, this poor fellow here, Scott McClellan, who is the spokesperson for the White House, says on October 3, which is after July when Rove already knew and told Libby, after September, when he already denied it once to ABC News again, Scott McClellan goes out in public and says, those individuals, Karl Rove, Elliot Abrahms and Scooter Libby, assured me they were not involved with this.

So they lied to their friend and colleague Scott McClellan as well. So here is where we are right now.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And subsequently made a liar out of Mr. McClellan. He is the spokesperson standing in front of the American people and the White House press corps. In fact, I heard an exchange yesterday between him and the White House press corps where he was pressed by them to acknowledge that he basically was trotted up there to the podium and forced to lie to them, unknowingly perhaps. But in addition to being lied to, he lied to the press and to the American people.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, now we have to be very careful with this next example, because although we can say that Karl Rove lied, we have to be very careful to respect to the Office of the Vice President here, and we intend to do that. This is the next set of facts. This is also from the obstruction count, count one, obstruction of justice in the indictment of Scooter Libby.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the reason why we want to be careful as it relates to the Office of the Vice President and President is because we respect the rules of the House, unlike some folks on the majority side that expand the rules of the House for their own gain. I just want to bring that clarification.

I do not want the Members, Mr. Speaker, to feel we are scared to call a spade a spade. We just want to respect the rules of the House, and I think that is very appropriate and in order in this case.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield further, absolutely. This is from count one of the obstruction of justice indictment of Scooter Libby, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. We have got to keep the dates straight again here.

On or about June 12 of 2003, which again is the summer of 2003, Libby was advised by the Vice President of the United States, who is currently DICK CHENEY, that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA in the Counterproliferation Division. Libby understood that the Vice President had learned this information from the CIA. That is what the count says. That is what the indictment says, that the Vice President on or about June 12.

Here we have the Vice President on Meet the Press in September, September 14 of 2003, a couple of months later.

Mr. Russert asks, ''He,'' Ambassador Joe Wilson, ''says he came back from Niger and said that in fact he could not find any documentation that in fact Niger had sent uranium to Iraq or engaged in that activity and reported it back to the proper channels. Question: Were you briefed on this finding in February or March of 02?'' Russert asked DICK CHENEY.

DICK CHENEY says, ''No, I do not know Joe Wilson. I have never met Joe Wilson. No, I do not know Joe Wilson.''

The indictment tells us that on June 12 he is telling Libby about Joe Wilson. And then he says a couple months later to Tim Russert, ''I do not know Joe Wilson.'' That is misrepresenting the facts. That is misleading, in my estimation, the American people once again.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I guess the question then comes down to what the definition of ''know'' is then. Is that really the problem?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield, I think so. What do you mean by ''know.''

Mr. INSLEE. I know what the Vice President meant by ''know.'' It was clear from any fair reading of this situation that when a person knows that the person they are trying to punish was an agent for the CIA and was involved in giving that information to a subordinate who destroyed the career and outed a security agent of the United States Government, and then would not want the public to know he was involved in that despicable act, he would say ''I do not know Joe Wilson,'' even though he knew Joe Wilson's name, what his wife did for a living, that she worked for the CIA, and, if he disclosed that, it would destroy her career and out an intelligence agent of the United States of America.

He may not have known him and shaken hands with him, but he departed from the truth on a most grievous matter involving the intelligence service of the United States of America.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, that is a great segue into what we are going to get into, which is the damage that has been done to the Central Intelligence Agency on this.

Here we have the Vice President told Libby about Joe Wilson's wife and then two months later denied even knowing who this person was. We have Karl Rove in the indictment known as ''Official A'' who said that Novak was going to write a story about this, and two months later on ABC and then a couple years later he denies even knowing Joe Wilson or having anything to do with this.

Now, is this illegal? We do not know just yet with Karl Rove, because this investigation is still open. But did Karl Rove lie to the American people? Yes. And he should leave office immediately, because he broke trust with the American people.

We have our good friend from Massachusetts, a former prosecutor, a former DA with a very distinguished career in law enforcement here to join us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I thank my friend, and again I want to congratulate the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) for really doing a public service. But I think it is important for a moment to reflect not just on this particular case, but what has characterized this administration from the onset, and that is a total lack of transparency, a total lack of genuine consultation. Secrecy, if you will.

What I find most fascinating are those members of the administration, people of good conscience, who have left the administration and are now speaking out. These individuals are good Republicans, good conservative Republicans who embrace genuine American values.

One of them is a former colonel in our military service, Larry Wilkerson. He also happened to be the Chief of Staff for the former Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Here is what he recently wrote in a column that I think provides the context for why this occurred. It gives us an insight into what was happening on the road to war and how little information the American people were given, how little information Members of Congress were given.

Here is what Colonel Larry Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, had to say on October 25 of 2005. One can go to the Los Angeles Times, and this same opinion piece was printed elsewhere.

''In President Bush's first term, some of the most important decisions about U.S. national security, including vital decisions about post-war Iraq, were made by a secretive, little known cabal. It was made up of a very small group of people led by Vice President DICK CHENEY and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Its insular and secret workings were efficient and swift, not unlike the decision making one would associate more with a dictatorship than a democracy.''

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Congressman, that is not you saying that. Who is saying that? Who wrote that?

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is Colonel Larry Wilkerson, a Republican, former Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Let me just say, and this is an understatement, this is disturbing. But this

is the atmosphere, this is the context, this is why we find ourselves in the situation where it is an embarrassment and it erodes the image of the United States. Whether you supported the war or you did not support the war, it is eroding the image of the United States all over the world, not just in the Middle East, not just in Europe, but in Latin America and in Asia.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, when you have that kind of mindset where you think you can get away with everything, when you think you can make these decisions in a box and you can take a country to war, as Thomas Friedman says, ''on the wings of a lie,'' then you end up with all the stuff we are already talking about. They just take it to the next level, and they think they can lie to the American people, lie to the grand jury and obstruct justice.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, what the gentleman from Ohio is saying is true, and I will just sum this all up. I have seen this with the Republican policies here under the President, as the means justifying the ends. In other words, they were determined, the President and his Republican colleagues that supported him in this secrecy and this coverup, were determined to go to war.

So it did not matter what the means were, they were going to get there. If that meant that they had to out a CIA agent and if it meant that they had to not tell the truth about what was happening in Iraq, if it meant that they had to go after those people who were trying to tell the truth and basically honestly tell us what was going on in Iraq, that did not matter, because they had to go to war. They had to attack Iraq. They had to go in there and get Saddam Hussein. So it did not matter what the means were, they were going to achieve that.

It is the same thing we had in the Watergate years with President Nixon. I hate to bring that up again, but it is true. The means justify the end.

But we see this over and over again with the Republican leadership and with the President Bush's policies, that they will go to whatever ends to achieve their goal. So there is no accountability. There is no feeling on anybody's part that they have to tell the truth or that they cannot ridicule people or destroy people's lives if they can accomplish their goal.

□ 2130

And that is basically wrong. It is very undemocratic. I mean, the gentleman from Massachusetts talked about the basis for democracy. The basis for democracy is free speech, that people can get up and express their views. But they do not want to hear the other views. They do not want to hear what the truth is about whether or not there was uranium coming from Niger to Iraq. They did not want to hear the CIA estimates that were saying that it was unlikely that Iraq was going to attack the United States, it was unlikely that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. They did not want to hear the truth, because they wanted to go to war. And this attitude is pervasive.

I mean, you have talked about it and the gentleman from Florida has talked about it here on the floor with so many other things that the Republicans do, not wanting to have hearings, not wanting to have bipartisan investigations of the hurricane, because they do not want to get at the truth. They have this ideology that says, this is the way it is going to be; and if you do not like it, we do not want you around here. We do not want to hear dangerous points of view, and it is a very dangerous view.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my friend from New Jersey would yield for a moment, I would direct my colleagues' attention to Wednesday, October 22, the Congressional Quarterly Today that you all know we receive once a week here. What is the headline? Just to reinforce and corroborate what FRANK PALLONE just said: ''GOP Says No to Probe of CIA Leak.'' Again and again and again, secrecy. Let us not look at it, because maybe we will find something ugly. Maybe we will find something that will embarrass the administration. Maybe we will find something that will embarrass the majority party and erode their power.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The Republicans.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Correct. Let me suggest this: what is at risk here is not the Republican Party, not the Democratic Party, but the viability and the health of our democracy. That is why, along with some very good Republicans, we are insistent that transparency be reintroduced into the legislative process.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if we had that transparency here, if the leadership here were willing to engage in transparency and get to the bottom of whether or not prior to the declaration of war and taking us into the Iraq war and misrepresenting facts to Members of this body, if they were willing to do that, then we would not be in the position that we are in today, so much so that today in the United States Senate, Minority Leader HARRY REID had the courage to use a rule that has not been used in 20 years, at least 20 years, rule XXI that has not been invoked in 20 years, to bring the Senate into a closed session because of the foot-dragging and hemming and hawing and hand-wringing over exposing the information on how it is that we ended up in the Iraq war, and making sure that they get to the bottom of how much information, following September 11 and prior to September 11, the administration actually had and whether it was available.

None of that information has been forthcoming. There has been opaqueness, not clarity, not transparency, so much so that Minority Leader REID had to force the Senate into closed session today in order to try to push them to get that part of the investigation rolling. It is just absolutely inexcusable.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one individual in the Senate said the Senate was hijacked, as though someone came in with a gun, waving it and saying, I am here to take over; but simply using the rules of that body, the Senate, just like we use the rules here in the House towards the benefit of the American people. Reports have said that what came out of it is hopefully a report that will surface in a couple of weeks about some of our intelligence failures.

I can say that Mr. INSLEE, a couple of speakers ago, mentioned the fact of outing a CIA agent, and I must say my good friend from the Garden State New Jersey and also Mr. DELAHUNT stated that a CIA agent, a clandestine agent, was outed, but a number of agents were outed. A number of agents, agents that we will not even know their names for now, left up to this White House; they may be outed tomorrow, if they get in the way. I think that it is 110 percent correct, as Mr. PALLONE said, if you get in the way, and I do not even like to use the word ''Republican,'' because I have a lot of good friends who are Republicans and I have some folks on the majority side that I know that they go home every night and lift the toilet seat up, and they are literally sick. They have to put their heads in a porcelain bowl because they are sick of what is going on in this institution.

It is shameful that we would sit here under regular order when CIA agents are being outed and being proven in indictments that they are outing these individuals for political gain. It is beyond politics, far beyond politics, what is going on.

I just want to read something here. Mr. DELAHUNT, we call those individuals like the colonel and others third-party validators. We want to make sure that the Members are not sitting in their offices thinking, oh, well, they go in the back and they just draw this stuff up. Members, the American people, Mr. Speaker, all they have to do is pick up the paper. They do not even have to turn the page; it is right there on the front page, what is happening in the moment.

And the question is, when folks start looking at the 109th Congress what we did and what we did not do and what we allowed to happen, we have an obligation, Democrat, Republican, and the one Independent in this House have an obligation to call the question on why we are allowing a number of things that are happening to our country, our country, our country, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, those that are not even registered to vote and those individuals that are seeking to become citizens in this country, it is our responsibility. It goes far beyond winning and losing here in this House and the games that are being played on a bill or two.

I just want to read here what was printed on the 10th, just a couple of days ago: a small Boston firm, Brewster-Jennings & Associates, listed as her employer, suddenly was shown as a bogus CIA front. Her alma mater in Belgium discovered that it was a favorite haunt for American CIA spy activity.

Now, this is a front. This is a company that we had set up. I did not know about it. I am pretty sure none of us knew about it. But the individuals in the White House that have the highest security clearances knew about it, outed this agent and outed a number of other agents behind enemy lines in a forward area. It is like saying, it is like calling up the enemy and saying, there are some marines right outside of Mosul, okay, and they will be there at 12 o'clock, to the insurgents. That is how deep this is.

We have individuals that are running around here without weapon, some folks have put their life on the line for this country, and it is shameful for the people that have the highest security clearances and I must add, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, appointed to have those security clearances.

Now, you speak of Mr. Rove. I mean, the way this indictment reads, obviously a lot of thought has gone into it. Statements were made to this grand jury, and he is still available and working as the deputy White House chief of staff, sitting in on meetings, the highest security clearance, hearing what the President hears, hearing what the Vice President says.

I am glad that I am not a CIA agent. I am glad I am not a clandestine agent working on behalf of this country, because I may very well be outed because I am talking about it. This is very dangerous. This is very dangerous, Mr. PALLONE, what you mentioned. It is very dangerous when not Big Government, just a few individuals in the government, take it upon themselves, they have the prerogative to out individuals that are career CIA agents. There is something fundamentally wrong with that, and it is very serious.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The gentleman makes a great point. We need to reiterate this to our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to the American people, that this outfit that is currently in charge of the House and the Senate and the White House will do anything that they need to do to promote and bolster their party, the Republican Party. They will be willing to do anything. And they have proven, not just violating the rules of the House or the spirit of the rules of the House by keeping the clock open so that they can pass legislation at 3 in the morning 15 times, or lie about the prescription drug bill, or lie about the war, but to out a CIA agent to benefit yourself politically is outrageous.

As my friend said, that is no different, especially in the 21st century when we are dealing with intelligence, the war on terrorism is a war of intelligence, and so those covert operatives are foot soldiers in forward areas; and it is, as has been stated, the moral equivalent of outing a CIA agent, outing a CIA agent is the moral equivalent of telling the enemy where the marines are, and they are coming.

Mr. PALLONE. Let me just briefly, because the gentleman from Ohio always says that we need to point out how things would be different if the Democrats were in the majority, if the Democrats were in control. And I always like to, because I guess I am the one who has been here the longest, take us back to another era.

I remember when the Democrats were in the majority here and I told you before, the Energy and Commerce Committee that I serve on, we would have investigation after investigation. This is when we had a Democratic President; it did not make any difference. We would have investigations of agency actions. Whether it was Health and Human Services, Department of Education, we would bring them before the committee and the Democrats were in the majority and we would ask all of these serious questions about fraud and abuse and whether or not too much money was being spent. And if a Republican wanted to bring up an issue and criticize the White House or criticize the Democrat in the White House, nobody stopped them. Nobody sought to put an end to that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So the gentleman is saying that when we were in charge, we actually put the country before our own political party.

Mr. PALLONE. Absolutely. I will take you even further back. You read about Jefferson and Adams and how they used to go at it on the floor and debate and argue and have totally different point of views and then, at the end of the day, they would be friends. They actually enjoyed the political debate and the fact that somebody was disagreeing with them. I mean, this notion that you go after the guy who you disagree with, or who is trying to bring out something that shows that you are not correct, that is un-American.

I do not want the public to think that this is what we do down here, that we just try to destroy the person who has a different point of view, or who is trying to bring out the truth that we do not agree with. That is not what the country is all about. This is supposed to be a country of free speech and free ideas and free flow of ideas. You start getting into this whole notion that if somebody disagrees with you, you are going to destroy them, then that is the end of democracy. I mean, this is serious stuff, I agree, not only with regard to the outing of CIA agents, but just the whole idea of going after your enemy because you do not like what he says. It is un-American.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, again, I think that Larry Wilkerson said it very eloquently. It is more characteristic of a dictatorship than a democracy. Tragically, the Republican leadership in this House has succumbed, if you will, to this insistence on secrecy that has really been embraced by the White House. Again, this is from last week's CQ Today: Republicans are resisting requests for congressional inquiries into a possible scandal linked to the Bush administration's rationale for invading Iraq. The debate over congressional involvement mocks a reversal for the GOP majority, which once had an appetite for layering congressional investigations of alleged executive branch wrongdoing atop criminal probes.

What we have here is an abrogation of responsibility by the Republican leadership to conduct oversight; and they have become part and parcel of a cabal, if you will, of secrecy with this White House. And maybe this is what we get when we have a single-party State.

Mr. Speaker, again, CQ Weekly, this is back in July. This is an independent publication, nonpartisan in nature; but it has become a topic of discussion and concern among people who are avid supporters of the concepts of free institutions in a democracy.

□ 2145

It is classified. Subject: Secrecy in Washington. Date: July 18, 2005. Secrecy is becoming the rule, and there is a whole bunch of redactions, rather than the exception in the Bush administration. But it is hard to hold the Government accountable if no one knows what it is doing, and that is what is happening. And the American people ought to be aware that we do not know what is happening. We as Members of Congress do not know what is happening.

And it does not just impact issues like this. Go back to when we had that Medicare vote. You remember that. We were not allowed access to the Medicare actuary's estimate of cost for the so-called prescription drug plan. Can you imagine that?

Then the debate here on the floor, the issue of cost was some $395 billion; and many Members on the Republican side expressed concern. The White House knew all the time that it was far in excess of $500 billion, and they would not even disclose it to Members of their own party. Talk about secrecy. Talk about consultation. It is missing in Washington. We have become and we are making America a secretive society, and it is time together we take America and make it better for all of its citizens.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It has been such a pleasure to serve with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) on the Judiciary Committee, and his eloquence and knowledge and commitment to making sure that truth is told is absolutely laudable.

You know, to follow up on what you are saying, there are consequences to the actions that they are taking. It is not just about that it is outrageous

that they have to be right and that they are dictatorial and that they insist on having their way and that, during one of the debates in the last Presidential election, President Bush actually could not think of something, of an instance in which he had been wrong. I mean, this is how arrogant this administration has become. This is how deep seated the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence has become. But it is the results of that arrogance and that attitude that is what is truly troubling. And troubling is too easy a word.

The other day we went beyond 2,000 men and women who are dead. Dead. Whose families are in tears. Whose mothers will never be the same again because they had to be right. Because it did not matter whether the information they had was true. They were just going to disseminate it. Because they had decided, clearly in advance of September 11, that they were going to take us into war in Iraq.

There are documents, like the Downing Street Memos that have come out, that show that they were fitting the facts around their previously arrived at decision. Sure, it is not President Bush's daughters. It is not Karl Rove's kids. What is Karl Rove still doing there?

Let us go back to the first slide that you had up there. Does it appear as though the President has stuck to his commitment as a candidate, which was, in my administration we will ask not only what is legal but what is right, not just what the lawyers allow but what the public deserves.

This is a man who has compromised our national security. This is a man who has compromised not just a covert CIA's operative life but the lives of countless operatives who worked with her, who has helped send more than 2,000 Americans to their deaths. For what? For what?

You know, last year, during the campaign, you had thousands and thousands of security moms who went to the polls, and but for just about everything else that they cared about, they cared most about making sure that their children were safe. They went and cast their ballot for this President, because they trusted him the most to protect them in a time of national security, against terrorism and disaster.

Now we have seen just how well he measures up in terms of his ability to protect people after a natural disaster. And clearly there have been troubling aspects of what they knew in advance of September 11 and whether they could have even prevented September 11 from happening, given the information that they had.

Now they led us into war with misleading information, prevarication, I will use every other word except the word I am not allowed to use as a result of our rules. But how can they not care about that?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I would like the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), who has been focused on this issue for some time, we would like to hear some of his thoughts on what is happening right now.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, Mr. Speaker, if I may, speaking from the State of Washington, what is happening right now is that a young man that I watched growing up, my neighbor's son, I watched him growing up, playing football, spunky, hard-working young man, he is due to go to Baghdad in January; and we all are obviously concerned about it. He is proud of his service. We are proud of his service. We wish the best for him. But it gives a personal dimension to what we are talking about here tonight. Because the reason that this young man that I watched grow up is going into the killing fields of Baghdad is because an administration started a war based on false information.

So this is a very personal matter as well as a public matter in my neighborhood; and it seems to me that, under those circumstances, for him and his mother and his father and his neighbors and all of the other young sons and daughters that could be in Iraq for we do not know how long, this administration owes it to come clean with the American people to tell us how this debacle happened, that they sent our sons and daughters into war based on a falsehood.

They have not done that yet. They have not come clean. And I want to note why this is so important.

I just had dinner with the Chief of Operations for the U.S. Navy, and one of the things we talked about was the need to improve our human intelligence. It has been debased over the years. We have just lost the spies, the old-fashioned spies we have had; and we thought we could do it all electronically. That does not work.

We talked about the need to increase our human intelligence, to do old-fashioned networks of spies. What does it do to our ability to recruit spies when it comes out that the Chief of Staff of the Vice President of the United States, at least under this assertion, was involved with outing the intelligence agency of the United States, which also exposes every single person that Ms. Plame had dealt with when she was overseas. Everyone she had ever met is now under suspicion as well.

What does that do to our ability to recruit new spies internationally? And what does it do to the sons and daughters we are sending to Iraq?

The administration still has not come clean. And let me just make a suggestion for the administration's own benefit, for their own benefit. We have seen this same error repeated over and over again, of administrations that get their hand caught in the cookie jar. What do they do? They get in the bunker. They start trying to hide the ball. They do not come clean. And these things drag out for years.

You know, if the Vice President or President had come forward 2 years ago and said, this is how this happened. This is where the intelligence came from. This is what Scooter Libby said. This is what Karl Rove said. I insist that they tell the truth, and I am going to insist on that or I am going to fire them on the spot. Forget the grand jury. This could have been over with 2 years ago. Instead, we are here talking about it tonight.

Now I want to mention one other thing I think is important in this. We are not sitting here as some criminal tribunal. We are Congressmen and women. We are not jurors. There is this grand jury and this pending indictment. There is a presumption of innocence. Mr. Libby is still presumed innocent in the eyes of the law, and I am going to treat it as such.

But what we are here to do is to make sure that if an administration, Republican or Democrat, tells us tomorrow that Iraq has nuclear weapons and we have to do something about it, that we can trust our administration with this information.

And I got to tell you, I cannot trust my executive branch of the Federal Government now to tell me what is going on in Iraq, Syria or Korea or anywhere else, because the President still has not come clean fully about what happened in Iraq, and that is very, very important.

I used to prosecute cases. I was a prosecutor, just misdemeanors. They were not higher-level felony cases. But I learned one thing in talking to police officers, and that was that there are certain things when you watch people that can indicate that they are up to no good, and one of those things is what is called furtive behavior. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) is an old prosecutor. He knows about this.

Furtive behavior means when somebody does something that looks they are trying to hide. When you do something that looks like you are trying to hide, it makes you think that person thinks that they have something to hide, which suggests that they are up to no good.

Well, let me suggest that there are two things that give me a little pause here. Mr. Libby, when he was talking to all of those reporters, according to Judith Miller, Judith Miller said that Mr. Libby said, hey, when you identify me as the inside source of all of this information, do not identify me as Chief of Staff of the Vice President, or even the executive branch, call me an ex-Congressional staffer.

Now if that is not furtive behavior I do not what is.

The second thing that causes me pause is that on September 14, 2003, we have got it up on one of those charts, Tim Russert, who is interviewing the Vice President of the United States, asks the Vice President, says, Mr. Wilson came back from Niger and said that in fact he could not find any documentation that in fact Niger had sent uranium to Iraq or engaged in that activity and reported back to the proper

channels. Were you briefed on his findings in February or March of 2002?

Vice President CHENEY responds, no, I do not know Joe Wilson. I never met Joe Wilson.

Now, why wouldn't the Vice President of the United States of America just tell the truth and say, yes, I know Joe Wilson. We looked into some issues. I had Libby look at it. Why would he not come out and tell the truth? Instead, what he says is, I do not know Joe Wilson, which we now know, according to Mr. Libby, assuming that is accurate, according to the indictment, the Vice President is the one that told Mr. Libby about Joe Wilson. Yet 3 months later we have the Vice President of the United States telling America he did not know Joe Wilson.

Now this causes me pause as an old prosecutor. And this is not a criminal matter. From my basis, we should not be wrapped about the axle of criminality but we should insist that Americans be able to trust the administration when it comes to war and peace; and we do not have that level of trust right now.

We need the cooperation of the President of the United States and the Vice President to come clean about what happened here and ask and answer questions that both Congress has, which they have refused to do, that is why we have the other Chamber wrapped up in this issue today, and ask questions that we ask essentially of the President and the Vice President. America deserves that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I believe you have the next hour, sir. We are running out of time. What I am going to do is, if you could, we want to get that Web site so we can click over and have more time so that we can continue to talk about this issue.

I am pleased that the Members who have been following this issue for a very long time on behalf of the American people are here. If you can give the Web site, I would appreciate it, real quick.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You can get ahold of us at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. We are going to get up these facts on the Web site, too, so you can follow them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the Democratic Leader and the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this hour.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we are going to keep on rolling here. We have so many facts to deal with.

Part of the conversation that we were just engaged in is we know that Karl Rove lied to the American people. We know that Scooter Libby has misrepresented facts and been indicted on five counts: one obstruction of justice, two making false statements, and two committing perjury, lying to Federal agents and lying to the grand jury.

We know that the Vice President of the United States has clearly, clearly withheld information from the American people, that the indictment has said that he knew all about, regarding the Valerie Plame investigation.

□ 2200

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to understand that not only did the Vice President and his chief of staff, Mr. Libby, withhold information from the American people; they have made a decision to withhold from the Senate Intelligence Committee key documents. It was reported just this past week in a national magazine, the National Journal, that the Vice President and Mr. Libby overruled advice from some White House political staffers, some White House political staffers and lawyers, and decided to withhold crucial documents from the Senate Intelligence Committee in 2004. The withheld documents included intelligence data from CHENEY's office and Libby in particular, that they pushed to be included in Powell's speech, referring to his presentation before the United Nations.

The new information, and I am reading here, the new information that CHENEY and Libby blocked information to the Senate Intelligence Committee further underscores the central role played by the Vice President's office in trying to blunt criticism that the Bush administration exaggerated intelligence data to make the case to go to war.

They withheld it from the Senate. They withheld it from the Senate. And because there is no conduct of vigorous oversight either in this Chamber or in the Senate, our democracy is being shrouded in this cloud of secrecy.

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) earlier said, What did we do it for? Why? Why? Why, I guess, is going to be the question that people will ask far into the future. If you remember, first it was about the weapons of mass destruction. No weapons of mass destruction. It was about some alleged al Qaeda links, a haven for terrorism. No al Qaeda links. Saddam Hussein despises Osama bin Laden and vice versa because Saddam Hussein, albeit an evil individual, was a secularist. He is not one of these fundamental Islamists. He is just a regional thug. And then finally it was to bring democracy to Iraq.

I think it is so ironic that we are bringing democracy to Iraq and simultaneously eroding democracy because of the secrecy in Washington, D.C.

What a tragedy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) said we are eroding basic freedoms here. And if you do not believe that, if you do not believe all of these facts that we are giving to the Speaker and to the American people and to our colleagues through third-party validators, if you weaken the Central Intelligence Agency, all you have done is weaken a country. That is all you have done.

And through the leak, through the outing of Joe Wilson's wife, and outing Brewster-Jennings and Associates, the small Boston company that was a front company for the CIA, you also out every contact that this woman has established over a 20-plus-year career. All of her contacts over 20-some years that maybe she could go back to and elicit and solicit information from them, she cannot any longer.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Maybe somebody can help me, because this is a question that the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) posed, but this is directed to this specific case.

What does it tell you about an administration that will not confront a direct challenge as former Ambassador Joe Wilson put forward? Why not just simply say he is wrong and we are confident that he is wrong? But, no, furtively, in the shadows, sneakily calling reporters, we have got something. His wife works for the CIA. Whether it was illegal, whether this indictment will result in guilty, whether Karl Rove is indicted, whether others are indicted, the bottom line is what does it say about the sleaze factor that exists here in Washington when you do it that way?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you right now, this goes far, once again, beyond politics. This is serious business.

We have Members here who have traveled abroad. I have. I am on the Armed Services Committee. I am on the Homeland Security Committee. If you know how it was to go down to a hotel lobby and go to a restaurant where you are staying there at a hotel, you come back to a hotel after official meetings with the government and you do not understand what people are saying, need it be French, need it be Arabic, need it be Spanish or what have you, now, just think for a minute. If I were a CIA agent in a foreign land, or someone in a friendly country that works with the United States as it relates to sharing sensitive information, how do they feel right now? How do they feel about America right now? How do they feel about our executive branch right now? And how do they feel about the Congress? This is going to hurt us.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) put it just as clear as it can be. It is weakening a country when it comes down to getting the intelligence to protect all of us here in the United States and our allies. And I think it is important, I think it is important, and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) hit the nail straight on the head. Like we say down in Florida, he hit the nail straight on the head just like a good carpenter.