

Shiite Muslims do not like that idea. The Kurds do not like that idea. That is not going to happen. What is going to take the place of the American-appointed 25-member group of what most Iraqis think are American puppets, the Iraqi Governing Council, what is going to take their place, particularly if the Bush administration has three different favorites to lead the next government? What comes next? We have got an arbitrary deadline set by the President of June 30 to withdraw the civilian authority, a date that seems more based upon the upcoming election than any ability of the Iraqi people to actually conduct a self-government.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman suggesting that there is no exit strategy?

Mr. HOEFFEL. I could not have said it better. There is clearly no exit strategy. In fact, there are three different strategies, if the Roll Call article is correct, about who is supposed to lead the next government, and all of this is supposed to come to fruition by June 30.

Iraq Watch has to come to fruition in 5 minutes tonight. I want to give my two colleagues an opportunity to make any closing comments.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say in that regard that this is my 30th year in public service. I have made friendships and conducted business, legislative business, and evolved personal relationships over those 30 years with a great number of individuals. I have particularly valued those who are sometimes disparagingly referred to as special interests or lobbyists as if that is seen by many people as a derogatory term or a term of denigration. And I do not see it that way. I want to make it clear in terms of my expressed disappointment with regard to this revelation about Mr. Woolsey; and now I guess I am going to have to wonder about everybody else too that I have a conversation with, I am not trying to keep people from making a living.

It does not bother me any. As I say, I have friends who lobby on behalf of what are called special interests. We all have special interests. We are a multiplicity of special interests. One has only to read the Federalist Papers to understand that. In fact, it can be seen as the bulwark of a democratic republic because we do have factions and many interests competing with one another for attention and for approbation. There is no question about that. The only question to be answered in that is do we know that, do we know who they are and what they are and why they are and so on so we can discern what the difference is?

I have no problem with people who are our friends, personal and otherwise, making their positions known to me or to anyone else in the Congress or anywhere else in public office. What bothers me is when positions are represented to us and we do not know that someone, in fact, is a paid representa-

tive, particularly on issues of war and peace, life and death. The folks know and the Speaker knows that I am a member of the Committee on Armed Services and those are the kinds of things we vote on every day, and I think every member there, regardless of party, takes seriously, deadly seriously, I might say without any sense of irony attached to it, take seriously their responsibility.

But we are dependent in the Congress on getting good information. The President of the United States is dependent upon getting good information and making solid judgments based on that information. Anybody who fails to give the best possible information with the fullest knowledge behind it and the resources is undermining the Constitution of the United States and failing their responsibilities as a citizen. In this regard, then, I feel ill used in this process by Mr. Woolsey, and I feel very definitely that the press and the Congress need to make inquiries of everybody who comes before us presenting that information and perspective to us upon which we have to act in matters of life and death. Everybody has to have the fullest inquiry made of them as to what their sources of income are and what their sources of information are, whether they are tainted.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, if I can add to the gentleman's comments, specifically about what appeared to be the distortions of information in Iraq. I am not speaking of Mr. Woolsey. I am speaking of the Iraqi Governing Council representatives, Mr. Chalabi and others. I do not want to see them benefit any more than they already have from their relationships if they have misled this country and this government, and I hope that Congress can figure out a way to deny those individuals, if we can show they intentionally misled us, from any further contract with the U.S. Government, promotion by the U.S. Government. If we have been intentionally misled, if we had gone to war in part under their false comments and under false pretenses, and particularly, as I believe happened, there have been additional American deaths because of that faulty information, we need to cut off those relationships and prohibit any further financial relationships with these malfeasors.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I think what he is saying is what we need is something that does not exist here in Washington at this moment in our history. And that is openness and transparency and accountability, and it is not happening. To think that, and I do not know whether it was the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) or the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) that mentioned it, they continued to benefit and with an attitude that arrogance is not a suitable adjective. It is far beyond ar-

rogance. And it is time to lay everything out on the table or the American people will lose confidence, not only in the President but in the Congress.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Can we conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that, at least for the three of us I think I can speak, there will be openness and transparency and accountability on this floor.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their comments. Iraq Watch will be back next week.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. KILPATRICK (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of travel problems.

Mr. OSE (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of family reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DEFAZIO) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONYERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. OWENS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MEEKS of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAYNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BURTON of Indiana) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEAL of Georgia, for 5 minutes, February 25.

Mr. HENSARLING, for 5 minutes, February 25.

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, February 25.