Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I am certainly proud that he is a friend and has become, and has been for a long time, not become, but has been a major and important voice for reason on this particular issue.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, just a note that I will be giving a Special Order in about an hour on 9–11, so if people are looking in to see about this, this is not the Special Order that I will be giving.

Mr. TANCREDO. Stay tuned. Stay tuned.

Mr. Speaker, I will end this Special Order with just this last reference. It is to one thing that was written in a book called ''Who Are We?'' By Samuel Huntington. This has become I think one of the most important books written, and it just came out actually in May, but it is a fascinating analysis of this whole issue we are talking about in terms of trying to understand the merging of multiculturalism, this sort of cult of multiculturalism and the issue of massive immigration and the erosion of the concept of citizenship.

Samuel Huntington puts it this way: ''The erosion of the difference between citizens and aliens, the overall declining rates of naturalization, and the naturalization spike of the mid 1990s, all suggest the central importance of material government benefits for immigrant decisions. Immigrants become citizens not because they are attracted to America's culture and creed, but because they are attracted by government social welfare and affirmative action programs. If these are available to noncitizens, the incentive for citizenship fades. Citizenship is becoming, in Peter Spiro's phrase, one more generally available 'Federal social benefit.'. If, however, citizenship is not necessary to get the benefits, it is superfluous. As Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith argue, it 'is welfare state' membership, not citizenship, that increasingly counts. Membership in the welfare state, in contrast to membership in the political community, is of crucial and growing significance; for some, who are wholly dependent upon public benefits, it may be literally a matter of life and death.''

It is citizenship, it is the concept of a nation State that we are today debating. Whether or not its existence can be assured, certainly we do not know, but I can guarantee my colleagues this, that the threats to its existence are great and are exacerbated by the cult of multiculturalism and unrestrained immigration.

REGARDING NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITIES AND THE REAL WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I am joined this evening by a number of colleagues interested in the safety of America and Americans, and concerned about the future of our military forces. We are speaking this evening because we have great reservations about the way America's national security policy is being conducted.

Sixty years ago next month, the American Army was welcomed into Paris with cheers and flowers and cries of ''Vive les Americains!'' We had fought a dogged and grueling war against the forces of a cruel dictator. And from every window and rooftop, a liberated populace honored the foreigners who restored their freedom.

Move forward 60 years to another war, another dictator, another country freed. To be sure, many Iraqis welcomed the American invasion and, for all the talk of coalition, this was an overwhelmingly American force. But those who welcomed our forces found they had to keep their voices low lest they become targets of those who rewarded their liberators with bombs and bullets.

We should not accept the appearance of an ungrateful Nation at face value. But neither should we idealize the occupation of Iraq.

It is increasingly clear that at a time when America should have focused its might on punishing those who, callously and in defiance of any known theology, attacked our country, and eliminating the threat they continued to pose, we allowed ourselves, Mr. Speaker, to be diverted.

What we see on TV every night is not the war on terror. The war in Iraq; really, now, the peacekeeping mission in Iraq, is costly and bloody and largely irrelevant. Was Saddam Hussein unpleasant? Yes. Did he bode U.S. ill? Without a doubt. But going to war against Saddam Hussein, taking people and resources away from the search for Osama bin Laden and the destruction of al Qaeda, is like the football defense that goes after the runner while the quarterback sneaks the ball across the goal line. We fell for the fake.

The real war on terror is the war to find and punish those who attacked this country and who would do so again. After nearly 3 years, their networks have been shattered, their organization has been bruised. But destroying such a strong and such a decentralized threat is very difficult. Any one man with a weapon of mass destruction is a superpower. The best we can do, militarily anyway, is to contain and keep the leadership incommunicado or on the run. That is the real war.

Is America safer with Saddam Hussein out of power? Probably. But is America safer because of the Iraq war? No, it is not. Because of the way we entered that war and the way in which we have handled the aftermath, I believe that we have increased the chances of another attack and, sadly, another war. We have incited the anger of millions who previously did not much like the United States, but probably would have been willing to live and let live. We have become the villain of millions of glittering eyes, and we did it to ourselves.

At the same time, we drove away stalwart friends whose company provided us with such strength. By forcing a political showdown on Iraq rather than focusing on the real war, the proven threat to all western civilization, we made our allies choose between the will of their people on the one hand and the relationship with the United States on the other, and it was unnecessary.

After September 11, the leaders of countless nations expressed their support to our President. Not one, not one called to gloat or said that we deserved what we got. NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time ever to come to the collective defense of the United States. They were all on our side, in the real war.

We chose to defy the will of the international community and take it upon ourselves to unilaterally enforce sanctions that were not solely America's to begin with. The Canadian Mounties cannot come to Lexington, Missouri to enforce Missouri law; that is the duty of the State of Missouri. Similarly, I do not believe it was right for the United States to act to enforce edicts that were not of our creation. That is why the United Nations was created. By taking it upon ourselves to literally become the world's policeman, we changed the view that many of our allies had of us. We became, in their view, not just a victim of a vicious attack, but a potential attacker ourselves.

Let me be candid, Mr. Speaker. I and some of those who will speak later voted to give the President the authority to move Saddam Hussein out. We did that based on the information at the time, much of which has since fallen into question. The former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Jack Keane, told the Committee on Armed Services last week, ''We were seduced by the Iraqi exiles.''

□ 2145

But regardless of underlying data, nowhere in our votes did we say to go it alone. Never did we say that Iraq should take focus away from the real war. At the same time, I twice wrote to the President and pointed out that ejecting Saddam is one thing, but we have to plan to manage the aftermath. That clearly did not happen.

The peace has been managed far worse than the war, and it has been argued that the United States invasion was justified as an act of self-defense. Indeed, this administration changed the national security policy of our country to assert the right of the United States to preemptively attack anywhere we believe there might be a threat to our Nation.

We have debated, and I am sure we will continue to debate, whether the

policy of preemption is wise or in keeping with American values. But this much is clear. In order to preempt, in order to become an aggressor, in order to throw the first punch, we had better have clear, convincing and accurate intelligence that a real threat exists.

As we are seeing in the case of Iraq, our intelligence system is not yet ready to meet that standard. Until it is, a doctrine of preemption puts America in the black hat before the world. Whatever happened to the Weinberger doctrine? Whatever happened to the Powell doctrine?

Mr. Speaker, if a global black eye were the only consequence of our Iraqi adventure, it might be manageable. We could live with it. But to do that and to take energy and focus from finding the true villains of September the 11 and to enter into a war that was not clearly necessary and to strain local economies by calling up reserves, National Guard and even retired military to serve in that war and to drive a wedge in the alliance that kept peace for 60 years and to engage in a bloody and costly occupation and to stretch the American military forces to the breaking point and ultimately to inflame new generations to hate America, with all of that, I cannot see how America is in the end safer or better off because of this war.

The Soviet Union tried to put America in this strategic situation for half a century. We did it to ourselves in just a year. On top of that, we have created a huge new burden for America's military. I recently wrote that we could have forces in Iraq for 50 years. When I asked the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz whether we would be in Iraq for a good many years, he said this is entirely possible, and he added, ''I cannot tell you how long that's going to take.''

I and many who stand with me have tried to be supportive of our President and our policies. We stand foresquare with the troops under fire and grieve for the families of those who have been lost, who, Mr. Speaker, come disproportionately from rural America. We stand with them. We cannot stand with the failure to prosecute the real war against those who attacked and continue to threaten our country. We do not oppose having a strong military, and we do not oppose using it, but we do oppose squandering it.

That is a question of priorities. Over $10 billion just this year on missile defense. Is the threat of foreign missiles the most serious one facing our country? Remember, this is not a defense against weapons of mass destruction. Those can be delivered in many ways. Missile defense addresses the delivery system with the highest cost and the lowest probability of being used against us. So why is it there that we spend the most?

The administration is devoting hundreds of millions a year to develop fighter planes that push the envelope of technology and knowledge, bold innovation, the edge, but the true threats to our country from people who have no fighter airplanes, have no aircraft carriers and have no satellites.

The war against terror is door to door and manpower-intensive, so spending all this money on other items should make us ask, where are our priorities?

Soldiers make the war on terrorism work, more than any doctrine or any system. Yet, the most personnel-intensive services, the army and the Marine Corps, are last in line for funding from the Defense Department. Where are our priorities? Why, Mr. Speaker, are we not throwing America's might into the real war?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES).

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and let me say, Mr. Speaker, that I associate myself with his comments. As a member of Congress, a veteran who has been to Iraq five times and have sat many, many times across from our men and women in uniform, as they look into our eyes and they show not just their commitment and their professionalism but their trust in us to do the right thing, and sometimes I wonder if we are not betraying our obligations of doing the right thing for them.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about an issue that is vitally important to our country and to the men and women that are fighting and defending our freedoms in Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, time and again attempts by this House to acquire documents related to the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal have been defeated, largely on party line votes. During consideration of the intelligence authorization bill, I offered an amendment, both in committee markup and on the floor of this House, to require the Department of Defense to turn over documents related to the handling and the treatment of detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere, including those documents that would come from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and documents that had been already asked for, not just by our Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence but by other committees in this House.

Both of these attempts, attempts to find answers to the questions that all Americans are asking and that all Americans are expecting us to answer, have failed, again, largely on party line votes.

Last Thursday the House Committee on Armed Services met to mark up H. Res. 689 and H. Con. Res. 472, two resolutions that are a direct result of the prisoner abuse scandal. H. Res. 689 would require the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the State and the Attorney General to transmit to the House information produced in connection with the investigations into allegations of abuse against prisoners and detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan and at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Unfortunately and disappointingly, the committee ordered that this resolution be reported to the House with an adverse recommendation. This is the second time in less than two months that the House Committee on Armed Services has failed to order the production of documents that could assist this committee in understanding and working towards a resolution of the prisoner abuse scandal.

In June the committee adversely reported H. Res. 640, a bill that sought documents associated with the investigation by Army Major General Antonio Taguba into the prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. I am deeply disappointed in this committee and at the partisan politics that are keeping America from learning the truth about what happened at Abu Ghraib.

Instead of supporting this fact-seeking resolution last week, Republicans on the House Committee on Armed Services preferred H. Con. Res. 472, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the apprehension, detention and interrogation of terrorists are fundamental elements in the successful prosecution of the global war on terrorism, and that the protection of the lives of the United States citizens at home and abroad.

Fundamentally, this resolution is mired in a lot of partisanship and may ultimately hurt our men and women in uniform. I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences that could result from the adoption of such a resolution.

By effectively absolving ourselves from adhering to the Geneva Conventions and instead following our own standards of ''humane treatment for those in our custody,'' we open the doors for the rest of the world to do the same to our own troops.

In the words of former prisoner of war, the Nation's first ambassador to Vietnam and past Congressman Pete Peterson, ''I know what life in a foreign prison is like. To a large degree, I credit the Geneva Conventions for my survival. While the Vietnamese rarely abided by the rules, the international pressure on them to do so forced them to walk a fine line that ensured that they not perpetrate the sort of shocking abuses at Abu Ghraib.''

It is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we live to the same standard that we expect other nations to abide by in the horrific event that they capture our soldiers. I am disappointed that the Republicans on the House Committee on Armed Services would prefer to have this resolution passed through our committee in the House rather than a resolution seeking the truth about what occurred at Abu Ghraib.

While we eventually voted to postpone marking up this resolution, the committee, however, is scheduled to take it up again this week. I hope that before then our colleagues will see the grave dangers that lie in insisting on

dismissing such behavior and not blaming it just on a handful of soldiers but instead recognizing it for what it is, a failure of our system and our failure on this committee and in this House to do our oversight responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here tonight as a concerned American, a concerned Member of Congress, and I join my colleague from Missouri in asking our colleagues to do everything that we can to exercise our oversight responsibilities. It is the right thing to do. It is what our men and women in uniform expect us to do as they sit across the table from us in places such as Tikrit, Mosul and other parts of faraway lands. They trust us. We cannot fail them.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER).

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Missouri, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the entire House of Representatives knows that our ranking member (Mr. SKELTON), who there is not a more patriotic individual, there is nobody in this body who is for a stronger defense, and I think our ranking member has two of his sons serving in the United States military right now. It is just an example of the great military tradition in his family. And the ranking member as a student of history has very insightful questions that he asks at hearings, and his questioning of General Jack Keane the other day was just an example of that.

And I was struck by General Keane's testimony, when he said that if we had to put it in graphic terms, the prewar planning in Iraq was about like this, more or less a bucket full, a large bucket full, but the postwar planning in Iraq was more like this, more like a thimble full. And our ranking member has quoted General Keane when he said that he felt almost that he had been seduced by the Iraqi expatriates into believing that the postwar situation would be easy, friendly, we would be greeted as liberators, not as occupiers.

The two issues that I would like to bring up tonight have to do with the troop commitment that Tennessee is making, yet again. We are the Volunteer State and the most recent group of reservists and guardsmen to be called up. The 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, these men and women in uniform are leaving family and friends back home for their tour of duty. They are proud to serve, but almost 4,000 Tennesseans will be involved in this mobilization, and that just reminds me that in this next rotation, 43 percent of our troops in Iraq, 43 percent of the 130,000 men and women in uniform, will not be active duty personnel. They will be guardsmen and reservists who are called up to serve their country in a faraway land.

I worry that our Nation is not aware of this terrific OP TEMPO, the fact that we have the heaviest OP TEMPO since World War II. A lot of folks do not know how to put that into perspective, because they think Vietnam was a big war or Korea was a big war; but, yet, due to the rotational demands on our troops, they are facing some of the greatest strains and stresses on family life and professional life than any other men and women who have served in uniform have faced since World War II. And the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment from Tennessee is just the latest example of that in our State.

Another issue I wanted to focus on, Mr. Speaker, was the cost of the war and honesty in accounting. People have said for a long time that truth is the first casualty in war, and I am worried that when it comes to honestly and fully disclosing the cost of this war, the administration has not been forthcoming. As the gentleman from Missouri knows, the administration included no money in this year's budget for the war in Iraq or Afghanistan. That is almost too incredible to be believed by folks back home. To have a war of this magnitude go on and to have the administration put zero dollars in their budget for Iraq or Afghanistan is incredible.

Finally, after Congressional pressure, they have inserted, as the gentleman knows, $25 billion in the budget, and I think this week the defense appropriations bill will go through and it will become effective immediately. It won't wait until the beginning of the next fiscal year in October. Because why? Our troops need the money now. They are running out of money, and it is the least we can do as members of the Committee on Armed Services to fully fund our troops, our men and women in uniform, while they are serving our Nation abroad.

That $25 billion will not last for very long. As the gentleman knows, the estimates we have got on the committee indicate it might last through October, November, December, and then come January of next year, the next Congress. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) estimates we could be facing $50 billion then, and none of this is being disclosed to the American people as it should be. I think we should be honest with them and forthright, let them know the nature of our commitment overseas and let them know the burden that they bear as taxpayers to pay for this, because this is a very serious financial issue. These are large dollars involved.

□ 2200

If you add it all up, the total expenditure of the war so far is in the neighborhood of 150 and $200 billion, 150 to $200 billion. This is to wage war on a country whose annual defense budget was about $1 billion. So it is an incredible situation that we are in. And I think by being honest and straightforward with our constituents back home, being straightforward with the American taxpayer, we will come a lot closer to getting through this conflict successfully, to winning and bringing our troops back home safely.

I commend the leadership of our ranking member. He has done a great job and has done so for many years on the committee, a true patriot, a true leader, a true lover of the American military, and a true supporter of our troops. It is an honor to serve with the gentleman, and I am proud to be part of this special order.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER).

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for his leadership of the House Committee on Armed Services, as ranking member, where he commands respect on both sides of the aisle and across our military.

Mr. Speaker, I have 3 unique privileges in this institution. One is to represent the people of Long Island's Second Congressional District. The second is to serve under the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). And the third is to serve under the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) on the House Committee on Armed Services, a committee which has no more profound and fundamental mission than to protect our troops and keep them strong so that they can keep our Nation strong.

How do we do that, Mr. Speaker? How do we keep them strong in order to keep our Nation strong? We do it by having right priorities and by giving them the best resources. Having the right priorities means that we be focussed. We have to have focussed priorities and disciplined priorities. And having focus and said disciplined priorities enables us to provide the best resources to our troops so that they can combat the global war on terror.

Sadly, Washington has fallen woefully short on those priorities. Let me share some examples that come from some of the people that I represent. These are real people with real stories.

I have a policy, Mr. Speaker, that if you have been deployed into any dangerous place in the world, if you are a member of our military or related to a member of the military, my door is open at all times. You can come to my office on Long Island. You can come to my office in Washington and I will sit with you and listen to what you have to say.

I sat with the mother of a young soldier who said to me at a table in HopHog, New York. She said, I had to send my son money in Iraq so he could afford the best armored vest because he did not have the best armored vest. And then I had to send him money so he could afford night vision goggled because I believe that my boy deserves the best night vision goggles. And my boy had to spend 2 or $300 our of his own pocket every month to give the men in his command socks and underwear because they could not afford to do that. She said, Do you not think that should be your obligation and not my obligation?

I want to share with you the story of Raheen Tyson Heighter, a 19-year-old from Bay Shore, enlisted in the Army. He was asked what kind of life insurance he wants. That 19-year-old did not believe he needed life insurance. Most 19-year-olds do not believe they need life insurance. He said, Give me the cheapest that you have. Because all he could afford from his net monthly paycheck of about $1,200 was a $10,000 life insurance policy. And his pay check was docked about 80 cents a month for that policy. Well, he did not make it back. He was killed in Baghdad.

His casualty officer called his mother and said, We regret to inform you that your son was killed in action and his life insurance policy was $10,000, which does not go very far.

I believe if we are going to send young men into battle, we can handle their life insurance premiums, Mr. Speaker. It should not have been to come out of Raheen Tyson Heighter's pay check.

I want to close by sharing a story that I heard from a young woman whose husband is in the Reserves and has just been deployed. He has been accumulating hundreds of dollars of cell phone calls on his personal cell phone which he loans to the men in his command so that they can call home because they cannot afford it without any reimbursement.

These families do not complain. They do not come to my office to complain. They do come to my office because they are patriots, and they believe that we owe them something back. They are seeking fairness. They say, if you are going to honor us, honor us not simply with your words but in your budgets. Do not simply put lapel pins on your lapels, but put us in your budgets and do not balance those budgets on the backs of people who are fighting on our fronts.

Those are our sacred obligations to the men and women that are fighting for our freedoms in dangerous parts of the world. There should be no Democratic or Republican way to protect our troops. We ought to do it because it is the right thing to do. And we ought to quit talking about our troops as priorities and spending as if they were our priorities.

It is my privilege to serve under the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) so we can reach that vital goal. It is my privilege to continue to advocate for those in my words who advocate for us with their sacrifices.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL). Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the opportunity. There has been a broad discussion here tonight on a variety of issues that we have been dealing with the on the Committee on Armed Services. I would like to thank the ranking member for the opportunity to share some of these views because we do not always get the opportunity in committee. We only usually have 5 minutes or so to question some witnesses that we may have before us or to talk about a particular issue.

Among some of the issues that were raised here tonight, I would like to shift the debate just a little bit over to Afghanistan. There were some of us when the war in Iraq began, where we were wondering, why are we going over there when we have obligations already in Afghanistan? And we had major obligations in Afghanistan. We had an international coalition that we had put together to go into Afghanistan on October 7, almost 3 years ago, to make this happen.

Reason we went into Afghanistan is that the Taliban, the ruling government in Afghanistan, was harboring terrorists from al Qaeda. Al Qaeda hit us on 9–11. We had every right to go into Afghanistan and try to rectify the situation and try to get the terrorists and try to destroy the al Qaeda network.

One of the problems in Afghanistan has been drug production, opium, heroine, poppy, is the main culprit there. And those of us who thought it was a bad idea to go into Iraq were saying, well, all the arguments that we do not believe they had weapons of mass destruction and we do not believe Saddam Hussein had any tie to 9–11 and all these other arguments that some of us were making aside, if we are going to be in Afghanistan let us be in Afghanistan.

If we want to try to set a democracy up in the Middle East, let us set one up in Afghanistan. We were already there. We invaded the state. We had taken control to a certain extent what was going on there.

We now, today, have 130,000 troops in Iraq. We have 17,000 troops in Afghanistan.

I want to share with the people at home here a picture of Afghanistan opium poppy cultivation in 2001. The areas that are producing or growing poppy in 2001 are in red. You can see a majority of the country is in white. Now I would like to share Afghanistan opium poppy cultivation in 2003. Nearly the entire country is producing poppies which is now, today, half of the gross domestic product in Afghanistan is poppy, $2.3 billion.

We have a narco-state on our hands in Afghanistan. And what happens is that in these outer regions outside of Kabul, which is the capital, the drug lords are running the show and they are making $2.3 billion worth of money that will eventually make its way back into the hands of al Qaeda, which their sole purpose in life is to destroy the United States of America, destroy the infidels.

So the question is, why do we have 130,000 troops in Iraq and only 17,000 in Afghanistan? We have $2.3 billion worth of poppies being grown and sold outside of Afghanistan. When General Myers was before our committee several months ago, maybe a month and a half ago, I asked General Myers, What are we doing about the poppy? What are we doing about the money that is making its way back to al Qaeda?

General Myers said, Well, we have a little problem this year. The harvest came in early. The harvest came in early.

So we have another year's supply of heroine on the market being sold that will eventually make its way back to al Qaeda to fund terrorists acts against the United States and the reason is the harvest came in early. We only have 17,000 troops there, and the question that I would like to ask the people at home across the United States of America, what would Afghanistan look like today if we had 130,000 troops there, if we spent $200 billion there, and we had the international community supporting the effort?

We would be much closer to having a democracy in the Middle East. I believe that we would not have $2.3 billion of drug money going back to al Qaeda to help fund acts against the United States. We would probably have elections very soon. And we would have the entire national community supporting the effort. And we would not be bogged down in the situation we are in now in Iraq.

So, when we look at the production and we look and see this next chart, how it has grown from 2001 when the Taliban ruled, they were obviously anti-narcotic, and the growth in 2000 and 2003 of opium production in Afghanistan. And when we look and see all the reasons that we have had for going to Iraq, and now the latest is create a democracy in the Middle East, we have spent $200 billion there. I think we had an opportunity, we had the commitment, we had the international community, we had the resolve to go into Afghanistan and set up this Arab democracy that would hopefully lead to the domino effect of leading the democracy throughout the Middle East.

So I want the people at home to know that this is a lack of leadership in my mind as to why we are in the position we are in. While we are over in Iraq struggling right now, we cannot forget that we also broke Afghanistan as we broke Iraq. And if we break Iraq, we have got to buy it, and it has cost us $200 billion. We cannot forget we broke Afghanistan. And I believe the major threat to this country is the money that is being taken out of this country through the drug sales and back to al Qaeda to lead the terrorist acts in this country.

So my point is that I think we have dropped the ball in Afghanistan. And I appreciate the letter the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) sent to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) last week saying that we need to have a full hearing on what is going on in Afghanistan and that the American people will not stand for the excuse that the harvest came in early as to why we have another $2.3 billion in the hands of al Qaeda.

I thank the gentleman for the opportunity and all his support with all the hearings that we have trying to get done in the Committee on Armed Services. I thank the other members of the committee, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) who was phenomenal in a classified hearing last week. I would like to thank him as well.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

□ 2215

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for bringing us together this evening. I thank him for training his insight on a situation that, as I say, this as somebody who did not vote for the resolution in the first place because of my apprehension, but I could not have foreseen it being mishandled in a way that has produced the situation we face today.

I salute the gentleman for his leadership, his voice of reason throughout my tenure in Congress during some very difficult times. Whether it is in the Balkans or it is the Middle East, he has focused our attention. He has asked the right questions, and he has done so in a way that permits people to get past some of their biases and concerns and I think really approach it in an open, honest and forthright fashion. I salute the gentleman for that. I appreciate the leadership he is providing this evening.

I listened to the gentleman's appraisal and I could not agree more, that, sadly, this administration was not prepared to win the peace, and this, as my colleague has pointed out time and again, is not the fault of our men and women in uniform, who have performed heroically. They have done the task that is assigned to them and more.

I think it is clear that what we have seen here has been a failure of the people at the top, who refused to listen to the men and women in uniform in the command structure. They have indeed, as the gentleman mentioned, been diverted from the real war in Afghanistan, something that the vast majority of people in this chamber were united behind. They understood that was the origin of the attack on the United States. That is where al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden were headquartered. That is where we needed to act. Sadly, we did not finish the job. We were diverted.

We have seen stress unprecedented on our National Guard and ready Reserve, and I appreciate the gentleman focusing on that. It is something that I encounter every week as I go home, hearing from the families, from the employers, the news accounts, the meetings we have had at home where sometimes there are people that just want to have a confidential moment.

A couple of weeks ago, I had a young man call the office. I was very tightly scheduled. He said, ''I'll tell you what. I know you're going back to Washington, DC. Can I come and ride to the airport with you? I just want to tell you what's in my heart before I go back.''

It was for me extraordinarily frustrating to hear this young man unburden himself. He was back stateside because he had won a special commendation. He was back, but he wanted me to know the deep concern that the men and women he served with had about what was going on.

As the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) said, we did it to ourselves. Three years ago, the world was united behind us. We had specific objectives. There was a sense of unity here that could have been mobilized and was not, but I think the question that the gentleman is raising for us is not just focusing on what went tragically wrong, understanding what is there, but he is focusing our attention on where we go from here, how do we do right by these young men and women in the field, how do we do right by the people in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Well, I think, first and foremost, I would like to see us do a better job at oversight, and I know the gentleman has done his best as the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, but there is no excuse for our not being able to do a better job of pulling this information out, sharing it with our colleagues and the American public, and holding people accountable, doing a better job of focusing on what is happening to the 5,600, what are we calling them, post-active duty people who are being brought back to service yet again. The strains that have been put on the ready Reserve, more people called up than in every previous mobilization from the Cuban missile crisis through every decade, every year right up till today, we have had this amazing stress.

What can we do? We can have an honest accounting of the costs and consequences, not the budgeting that puts it off till the future. We can chase down what happened with that prison abuse scandal and not scapegoat a few young men and women who were in a situation, candidly I think, over their heads. I would have liked to have thought that they would have known better, but by no stretch of the imagination can the evidence coming forth lead us to believe that we can resolve this by simply coming down on a half dozen, a dozen of these young men and women. It goes much further up the chain of command, all the way to the top. When we look at what orders have been issued, side-stepping the Geneva Convention, detention, it is a failure of responsibility at the top. We ought to hold them accountable.

There is also the focus on the people who are, to a greater extent than ever before in wartime in the United States, dealing with unaccountable, unelected, no-bid contracts and contractors who are doing things that should be the purview of the United States military, and had they been done, they would have been done far, far better.

We can shift much of this activity overseas to the locals, but it is insanity when we are paying $10-, $12,000 a month for contractors to drive a truck when we have Iraqis, for instance, unemployed, who would take that job for a couple hundred dollars a month and put that right back into their families.

Last, but by no means least, it is important that we not forget about Afghanistan, and I appreciate my colleague focusing our attention on that this evening. Here is a country from which the attack on the United States on 9/11 was launched. Here is a country that has been abused and damaged for over a quarter century. It is larger than Iraq. It is poorer than Iraq. It has a larger population than Iraq. Our friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) just pointed out how narco-terrorism is building and some of those resources are being used against us in the war on terror, and yet we are investing less than one-tenth of the amount of money in Afghanistan as we are in Iraq, and we have a much tinier military footprint, about one-ninth.

I appreciate the gentleman from Missouri's (Mr. SKELTON) leadership, his attention and the calm and quiet, thoughtful way he has analyzed this issue in a way that I think ought to touch the mind and heart of every Member of this chamber. I look forward to working with him in the weeks and months ahead to try and recover our momentum, our balance, and place our priorities where they belong and do right by the American people, the Iraqis, Afghanistan, and win this struggle against terror.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my friend, the gentleman from the State of Oregon.

I now yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for bringing this issue before the House tonight. This is an issue that I spoke about this morning, and it seemed strange to me, as I was coming in here about to ask him for some time, to realize that his thinking and the thinking of the people who have been speaking are very much where my mind was.

I think it is probably where the American people actually are because, in my view, it is past time for America to have a national terrorism policy. The line between countries we call friend and foe is blurred. The distinction between peril and safety is just as vague here at home. America has too much at stake not to consider a national terrorism policy as a work in progress.

Civil liberties hang in the balance at home. Credibility is questioned in countries around the world. Military personnel are fighting and dying in one country today, but what about tomorrow? America is spending in excess of

$150 billion in a country that has more to do with errors in judgment than threats of terrorism against the United States.

The patchwork of actions and reactions about terrorism are long on rhetoric but stop well short of defining potential threats and responses or a philosophy to guide America. Questions need to be asked and answered, and that is why what the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is doing tonight is so important.

The acting director of the CIA admits that a good case can be made for a new Cabinet-level Secretary to oversee all of the Nation's intelligence agencies, but the director thinks some changes in the CIA could accomplish just as much.

Now, in Washington, D.C., turf issues are big issues. Are the remarks by the acting director turf or analysis? When it comes to terrorism, the old ways of Washington, turf among them, must change.

The President took America to war in Iraq over alleged ties to terrorism, now proven incorrect. We learned just today that eight of the 9/11 hijackers passed back and forth through Iran before the attacks. We learned the Iranian government instructed border guards to let all al Qaeda pass. The CIA says there is no evidence of an official connection, but there is tacit approval, at a minimum. The same could have been said before Iraq, but that did not stop the President from going to war.

What does this new information mean about Iran? The President says he launched a preemptive war in Iraq. Well, will the President launch a postemptive war against Iran? Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. Iran is openly developing a nuclear capacity, claimed peaceful at this point, but outside the scope of objective knowledge and data. Is Iran next for U.S. military action? Why? Why not?

Given Iraq, would Congress write this President another blank check for anywhere else in the world? What about North Korea? There is a regime that is as oppressive as Saddam's. There is a country that bought weapons technology from our old friend or our new friend and our old nemesis Libya. There is a country where weapons are almost certainly not theoretical. Are we going into North Korea anytime soon? We are pulling our troops back in South Korea from the border. We are thinking about moving some of them to Iraq. What does that mean?

Today, Libya must be in line for, and I am not kidding about it, a football game. Mr. Qaddafi may have isolated himself economically for years, but he could still watch television. So, today, Qaddafi is trying to buy a British sports club, hoping that the English version of football will thaw the icy relations.

Then there is Pakistan. They were not at the top of our list until we needed a friendly Nation in the Middle East after the September 11 attacks. Now, Pakistan is a key ally. We have made them a non-European NATO ally. Is that good for Pakistan and the United States? If so, why? Is it a good thing for relationships between India and Pakistan and the United States? If it is, does this mean that the world is so interconnected that the notion of friend or enemy no longer applies?

After all, we remember the television networks have shown pictures of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld bringing greetings to Saddam Hussein, not that many years ago, in the administration of Bush I. He was a bad guy then, but Mr. Bush liked him, and I guess that was good enough for those days.

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Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago he became a bad guy. We did not like him any more, and we all know what happened then. What is the distinction between Saddam Hussein in Bush I and in Bush II? He just gassed people in his own country in Bush I. America needs a better definition of policy than just expediency. American policy today is grounded in reaction, not philosophy.

There has been enough time since the tragedy of 9/11 for the President to articulate a terrorism policy for the Nation to debate, adopt and defend. All of us gave him some slack right after 9/11. Who would not want our President to have the power to deal with what he needed to deal with at the moment, but that is a long time ago.

We see nothing. We do not have a policy, and the headlines can prove it. We have a military stretched so thin that the President launched an undeclared draft to compel soldiers to return to active military duty. If officers did not resign their commission, the service can reach back 20 years to bring them in.

The New England Journal of Medicine just carried a study that 1 out of 5 people coming home is subject to psychological problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other problems. We are suffering casualties. If we think out of 160,000 people, 1 out of 5 coming home, that is 30,000 people, never mind all of the people who have lost an arm or leg. Now we have psychological problems coming home as well.

Does America need a draft? The administration says no, or not until at least after the election. They say this ''no'' just after they have issued stop-loss orders to prevent soldiers from leaving active duty in Iraq. We have an indefinite military commitment in Iraq. But why, if we supposedly handed the country over to the Iraqis?

America lives in perpetual terrorism-alert status. Is there nothing to be gained other than a CYA for this policy? Who decided that we should be told to be very worried just after America was told not to worry any more that we were already worried? They are moving the fear back and forth and keeping the American people on edge, and that summarizes the administration's recent public statements on terror. It also symbolizes the lack of a coherent terrorism policy.

Today the administration basically says just trust us. Just trust us. America's response should be mine from the Reagan administration, ''Just Say No.'' We did trust, and that is how we got into Iraq. The safety and security of America is everyone's business. It should be debated in this House before the People's Body. Every district, every person in this country is represented on this floor. It should not be decided by one man. I think the average American knows that and knows what the administration has given us so far is not a policy but wishful thinking.

Mr. Speaker, the President has 105 days to articulate the terror policy, what he is really trying to do. If he does not do that, we are going to have a new President.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for yielding me this time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. Let me close by saying at the end of the day we all need to pay tribute to those wonderful, wonderful young men and young women in uniform, whether they come from Missouri, Washington, Ohio, New York, Florida, or all across our country. They are professionals. They know what their duty is, and we certainly wish to salute them this evening as well as the families that support them and wish well for them and of course pray for them.

9/11 WAS NOT PREDESTINED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for half the time before midnight, approximately 43 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) who has always had the respect of his colleagues. I know that the gentleman is very serious and sincere about the national security of the United States. I appreciate him trying to put forth some creative and positive alternatives to the current policies he may or may not agree with in terms of the war on terrorism.

There are positive opponents to the President and there are negative opponents to the President. There are people who offer alternatives, and there are people who do nothing but undermine the President's policy; but there are also those who have legitimate complaints and alternatives to offer, and I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for always trying to provide the alternative.

Let me note, after hearing our last colleague who spoke, Saddam Hussein had a blood grudge against the people of the United States of America. He