I have great confidence in the American people and the American entrepreneur. We can do this. It would eliminate our reliance on Middle Eastern oil. We would increase production of alternative fuels in America. We would promote hybrid and flex-fuel vehicle technology in manufacturing, and we would enhance energy efficiency and conservation incentives. This is the direction Democrats feel we need to bring this country in order to make sure that our security is in fact very real.

I want to yield to my colleague from Maryland for his closing remarks and once again thank you for not only this evening, but for all of your work on the national security plan.

□ 1715

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague, Mr. SCHIFF from California, again, for his leadership. And I think we have covered a lot of territory in this hour. I think we will have a continuing conversation here in the Congress, and I am sure we will have a continuing conversation throughout the country about this very important issue.

And, again, it goes to the question about whether we take our words seriously in terms of moving the policy of this country forward. And you can't have a situation where you have the President say this is a national priority, on the one hand, and then have a budget that comes down the next day that sends a very, very different message because, if you do that, number one, you lose credibility with the American people; and, number two, you obviously can't achieve your objective if you don't harness some of our national resources to this very important, very important effort.

So I want to thank my colleague for his leadership on this issue. And I hope that in the days ahead, this Congress will move from a position of rhetoric on these issues to actually doing something meaningful and taking this country in a new direction when it comes to energy policy, which, as we have discussed tonight, is such an important component of our national security policy as well. So I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue.

THE ORIGINAL MISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, before I get to the topic that I want to spend at least the lion's share of the next hour on, I want to respond somewhat to the commentary from my friends on the other side over the last hour and really agree with them on a whole lot of issues.

As the cochairman of the bipartisan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus here in the House, which has over 218 members, a majority of the House belong to our bipartisan caucus. Congressman MARK UDALL of Colorado is the Democratic cochairman, and I am the Republican cochairman; and we are working together to advance many of the initiatives that they have talked about as quick as we can.

I do think that tremendous energy now is put behind the goal of becoming energy independent as soon as possible in this country.

Last night, Congressman UDALL and a bipartisan group that I participated in met for about 2½ hours with Vinod Khlosa about this issue of cellulosic ethanol and what potential it has in this country for transportation.

Earlier today I participated with Congressman INGLIS of South Carolina, who chairs the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Caucus here in the Fuel Cell event we had in Cannon Caucus.

Just a few days ago we had the Renewable Energy Expo here, which Congressman UDALL and I participated in. Through all of these efforts, I would say that what we are doing is not this particular technology or that particular technology, because in many ways our free enterprise system is going to sort the winners and losers out.

But, really, our position is we have got to do all of the above. Time is of the essence. I don't think we can pick and choose right now. We need domestic capacity, so we have to go after new oil and gas resources. But we have to wean ourselves off foreign oil and move towards advanced transportation systems.

Clearly, hybrids are a bridge. We want to promote that. But we have got to move through all these technologies.

I think fuel cells have great applications but, frankly, so do the E85-based fuels.

So I just want to say that that is something that many Members from both sides of the aisle are doing an awful lot about.

Last summer the Congress passed EPACT, the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This President signed it into law. Today we hailed, many people in a bipartisan way, the successes that the tax incentives give to the renewable sector, to the fuel cell sector, to the advancement of hydrogen. I would argue that we need to go further because the production tax credits that are in that bill need to be extended for a longer period of time so that the industry out there has a definition. They know what to expect. It is not a 2-year thing that might or might not be renewed. So clearly, we need to do more.

But there is bipartisan resolve to advance all of our energy sources as rapidly as possible. And so I applaud them in a sense, but I would also say that there is no silver bullet. We need to do all of the above, and we can't just rely on particular fuels. We need to increase our domestic capacity.

Now, to lay the groundwork for what I am going to talk about, with the help of a couple of my colleagues, Mr. MCCOTTER from Michigan has joined me already, and I think the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) will also join us.

I want to talk a little bit about world events, but then get to the meat of this hour, and that is the United Nations and whether or not it is living up to its original charter, whether or not it is a viable organization today, or whether or not, frankly, it has been corrupted over time, especially in recent years.

But I want to say, to begin with, that I think to define this war that we are in as a war on terror misses the point in many ways. Terror is a tactic that our enemy is using, but it is not really a war on terror. We need to be honest that we are at war with the Islamic jihadists. The jihadists are spreading their networks around the world.

A letter between Zarqawi and Zawahiri laid out specifically that they wanted to use our involvement in the Middle East as an opportunity to remove the infidels from Iraq, and then expand the califate, according to Mohammed, from Morocco in Northwest Africa, all the way into Indonesia. Clearly, aggression is part of the plan.

And the jihadists don't just surface through al Qaeda. The jihadists surface through Hezbollah, frankly, a seasoned terrorist organization that has now taken up a very important place of power in Lebanon, supported, without question, articulated last night on the floor of this House, by Iran and Syria.

Democrats and Republicans, over and over again, last night, as we debated the resolution in support of the State of Israel, talked about who is backing Hezbollah right now. Hamas, also elected to governmental leadership in Palestine, includes the jihadists, people who have declared war on the United States of America and its ally, Israel. And this really is a war of global proportions. And we need to be realistic about this and share with the American people the seriousness of the moment that we live in and rise to our generational call to address this issue and not just think that this is about Iraq.

If we pulled out of Iraq tomorrow, Islamic jihadism is on the rise. And they continue, as we see in Lebanon, to seek to destroy the State of Israel and seek to drive America back and bring us to our knees. We must stand tall and straight.

Now, the United Nations is an organization that I believe was founded with good intentions. As a matter of fact, a prominent Tennessean named Cordell Hull was very involved with it. And if you call the Congressional Research Service or look for the records of all this, and we did, you find out the history of all this, because Cordell Hull came out of the State of Tennessee. He was elected to Congress in 1907. He served here in the House until 1931. He was elected United States Senator, but

resigned upon his appointment as Secretary of State by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933.

Foreseeing danger to peace in the rise of dictators, he advocated rearmament, pled for the implementation of a system of collective security, supported aid short of war to the Western democracies, condemned Japanese encroachment into Indochina, warned all branches of the United States military well in advance of the attack on Pearl Harbor to prepare to resist simultaneous surprise attacks at various points.

Although Hull participated in some of the policy-making conferences of the allies, his major effort during the latter stages of World War II was that of preparing a blueprint for an international organization dedicated to the maintenance of peace and endowed with sufficient legislative, economic, and military power to achieve it.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war, Cordell Hull proposed the formation of a new world organization in which the United States would participate after the war. To accomplish this aim, in 1941 he formed an advisory committee on postwar foreign policy composed of Republicans and Democrats. Mindful of President Wilson's failure with the League of Nations, Hull took pains to keep discussion of the organization nonpartisan.

By August of 1943 the State Department had drafted a document, entitled ''Charter of the United Nations,'' which became the basis for proposals submitted by the United States at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference.

Poor health forced Hull to resign from office on November 27, 1944, before final ratification of the United Nations charter in San Francisco. President Roosevelt praised Hull as the one person in all the world who has done his most to make this great plan for peace, in effect, a fact.

Following nomination by Roosevelt, the Norwegian Nobel committee presented the 1945 Nobel Prize for peace to Cordell Hull in recognition of his work in the Western Hemisphere for his international trade agreements and for his efforts in establishing the United Nations.

Too ill to receive the award in person, Hull sent a brief acceptance speech that was delivered by the United States Ambassador to Norway, in which he wrote: ''Under the ominous shadow which the Second World War and its attendant circumstances have cast on the world, peace has become as essential to civilized existence as the air we breathe is to life itself. There is no greater responsibility resting upon peoples and governments everywhere than to make sure that enduring peace will, this time, at long last, be established and maintained. The searing lessons of this latest war and the promise of the United Nations organization will be the cornerstones of a new edifice of enduring peace and the guideposts of a new era of human progress.''

As a matter of fact, the U.N. charter preamble says this: ''We, the peoples of the United Nations, determine to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and reaffirm faith and fundamental human rights in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. And for these ends, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. And ensure by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods that armed force shall not be used save in the common interest, and employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.''

Now, that is a bold plan for an organization, to secure international peace and guarantee international security. And I just want to say, fundamentally, a fair assessment of the United Nations in 2006 on its original mission is a low grade. If not an F, it has got to be a low D, because the United Nations today, as was written yesterday in a column by Norm Ornstein in Roll Call, is effectively impotent in certain areas of the world today.

Clearly, as we look at the observers in southern Lebanon and the U.N.'s role with peace keeping, we are facing the most difficult challenges of our generation with respect to war and peace, and the United Nations is not effective anymore. That is the sad truth today, and we are trying to change that.

Here in the House of Representatives, we passed the Henry Hyde United Nations Reform Act and sent that bill to the United States Senate, where we can't even get agreement on a conference report. As a matter of fact, that bill said that there were 38 recommendations for reforming the United Nations to clean up the graft and corruption, make it more efficient and accountable, have it live up to its original charter; and unless 31 of those 38 reforms were implemented, we were going to, the United States of America, withhold up to 50 percent of our dues to that organization. And we are, and will show later in this hour, by far and away the number one contributor to the United Nations in the world.

□ 1730

We were trying to bring some accountability to the United Nations, and I have to tell you that the resistance to that accountability not only comes out of the heart of the United Nations, but there is resistance even in this country for reforming the United Nations.

I have to say this Member of Congress from the State of Tennessee, much like the Member of Congress from Tennessee who received the Nobel Peace Prize for starting the United Nations, looks back on the legacy of Cordell Hull and, sadly, says that we need to reevaluate our participation in the United Nations as long as it is going in the direction that it is going in.

Before I yield to the gentleman from Michigan, I want to point to a book that has been written, called The U.N. Exposed, by Eric Shawn.

Eric Shawn is not an author trying to make money writing a book. Eric Shawn is a very legitimate journalist who has been incredibly effective over the years at reporting on the United Nations. It is very similar to a reporter covering city hall that sees so many things going on in city hall that, after a long period of time, they just kind of look themselves in the mirror and say, this stinks and somebody needs to write about it. And this book documents all of the graft, corruption, deals, inefficiencies, arrogance that exist at the United Nations. The U.N. Exposed. And I want to just read a page out of it in the introduction to set the stage and then yield the floor to the gentleman from Michigan.

In the introduction it says: ''Terrorism is not a United Nations priority. The majority of its members are focused on 'development,' '' which is ''diplomat-speak'' for increasing the amount of money coming into their own nations. Terrorism, even though it should be the most pressing international issue of the 21st century, is simply not on most U.N. agendas.

''The United States is compromised. The United States funds a whopping 22 percent of the U.N.'s $3.6 billion budget, pays 27 percent of an additional $3.6 billion in peacekeeping operation costs, and provides billions more for the U.N. agencies and related operations each year. And yet the United Nations has become the coliseum for confronting and opposing the United States. With the end of the Cold War and the rise of one lone superpower, the United States' veto-wielding rivals press their agendas at our expense and maneuver for their own advantages, not ours.

''The United Nations Security Council guaranteed security for the Iraqis and an unstable and untenable environment for American and British forces attempting to enforce the Council's mandates from 1991, when Saddam surrendered in the Gulf War, to the 2003 invasion made necessary by the U.N.'s malfeasance. Had the Council and the United Nations held to moral principles and enforced their resolutions and requirements, the war could have been prevented. There would have been clarity, not confusion, regarding Saddam's possessions of weapons of mass destruction. His corruption and bribery of the Council created conditions of uncertainty that empowered his regime.

''The same mistakes are now being repeated elsewhere. The U.N. is incapable of effectively resolving the nuclear threats posed by Iran and North Korea, member states that have in some cases lied to U.N. officials, including those of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or, in other cases, ignored their request.

''While the U.N.'s humanitarian programs are rightfully praised for providing food, shelter, and medicine to millions of the world's needy, they have now also come under questioning and criticism. The U.N.'s own independent investigation, headed by former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker found that even the gems of the U.N. system, such as the World Food Program, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF, operated in Iraq with 'little transparency and oversight' amid evidence of 'gross mismanagement.' ''

A fair assessment says the United Nations is not effective at all in international peace and security and they do provide humanitarian assistance, but even their provision of humanitarian assistance is grossly mismanaged, and basically everybody involved in the leadership of the United Nations is, in one way or another, benefiting financially from the very programs that come through the United Nations.

We are going to document even more of that as we go on. But at this point I want to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, THADDEUS MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding.

I am here as a Representative from Michigan. And as many of you know, and I am sure you do, Mr. Speaker, Senator Arthur Vandenberg from Michigan played a key role in bringing the United States into the postwar world. He originally started out of Grand Rapids as an isolationist. And yet as he saw the gathering clouds of World War II and the impact of isolationism and appeasement upon the course of world events, he quickly became a believer in the United States' role in the world, and not simply being in the world itself and going along with the tide of history but trying to direct that tide of history towards a positive outcome for our own citizens and for humanity.

This is why today, as an admirer of Senator Vandenberg and, yes, as an admirer of President Roosevelt, we have to admit that today the dream of President Roosevelt has been turned into a nightmare by the corruption of the United Nations.

The dream which President Roosevelt inherited from President Wilson and his League of Nations, a torch that President Roosevelt carried throughout election after election, despite its being many times unpopular, has been put in the hands of people who operate the United Nations not as an entity to bring about global peace and prosperity and security through mutual diplomatic action but rather as a corrupt political machine. In fact, the United Nations has one advantage over a traditional municipal political machine. It is that the enormity of their crimes tends to mask their crime.

The global scale of the theft, which the gentleman from Tennessee will soon help to elucidate, has masked the simple fact that they are operating in their own interests rather than the interests of the citizens of the United States and rather than the interests of people throughout the world.

One of the things which is most striking, as the gentleman pointed out, is the fact that when we look back upon the search for weapons of mass destruction by the Security Council and the resolutions that were passed and passed and passed, and ignored and ignored and ignored, is the simple, ineluctable fact that Saddam Hussein had bribed the jury, that Saddam Hussein had taken the Oil-for-Food program and turned it into an instrument not only for his aggrandizement and enrichment at the expense of starving people in his own nation, he also utilized it to buy influence amongst member countries at the Security Council level.

When viewed in that light, it is easy to see why there was such discord and such incomprehensible division amongst former allies and erstwhile allies in the buildup to the invasion of Iraq by the United States to liberate that country from Saddam. It is also easy to see why, in so many other instances when dealing with the dictator, it was very difficult to get the U.N. to take a stand and to commence action to enforce its own resolutions.

As the distinguished ranking member of the International Relations Committee, Mr. LANTOS of California, has pointed out, the United Nations is a derivative reality. As he points out, it is a derivative reality in the sense it is composed of member states. And member states can be bad actors on the international stage or good actors on the international stage, and when they come together, the results can often be less than productive.

But in the end, it is not the position of myself or many in the United States who are encouraging U.N. reform that the U.N. do what we ask it to do or that it be led by the nose by the United States of America and back us in all our diplomatic efforts.

But what we are trying to do, through the Henry Hyde bill and through other attempts legislatively, is to guarantee a fair and impartial hearing amongst the Security Council and amongst the member states and know that when we make our case that we will not be greeted by a bribed judge and jury, but that we will be greeted by other sovereign nations acting objectively in the best interests of world security and world prosperity.

It is this chance that we were cheated of, and it is this chance that we are endeavoring to restore because endeavoring to restore the integrity to the United Nations, we are endeavoring to rekindle the spark of the dream of Franklin Roosevelt and the entire postwar generation that hoped that the horrors of the Second World War would not be lost upon future generations, thus condemning them to a third world war. Arguably, that chance has already been lost.

Regardless, we must press ahead because the United Nations as a concept, as an ideal, has a very practical value in the world today. And I think it is very difficult for us not to confront the reality that it is not performing that function, largely due to its own corruption.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his commentary.

What is the United Nations? To a lot of people, they may not have been there, they may not realize it, but it is an 18-acre compound on the East River in Manhattan, in New York City. And that 18-acre compound, which is very much delineated, detailed in Eric Shawn's book, is basically a safe haven for everyone who operates there. They are immune from virtually everything. They do not even have to pay sales tax on the food that they eat in New York City. They do not have to pay their parking tickets. They operate with such impunity that they, frankly, have become incredibly arrogant toward our country.

The number two guy at the United Nations, Malloch Brown, recently just delivered a scathing analysis of the United States' position toward the United Nations as if we had no business whatsoever meddling in their organization, as if we should not in any way exert oversight when, again, about a fourth of all of their revenues come from us and they have this autonomy here in our country.

The Oil-for-Food scandal, which an investigation was ordered on here in the Congress, it showed such gross graft and corruption that it could very easily be the largest case of grand larceny in the history of our country in terms of the billions of dollars that were siphoned off and used to manipulate, to effectively bribe member countries; even, as one of the chapters in the book shows, the media, the press that covers the United Nations, setting up these organizations where reporters could actually draw income from outside of their work at the United Nations. Now, if that is not a conflict of interest for a journalist, I do not know what is.

But Saddam Hussein methodically set out to use the revenues from the Oil-for-Food scandal to keep the countries that could very well force the United Nations or hold the United Nations back from going in and enforcing their resolutions in Iraq. He used the money. It was a scheme. It was a scam, a multibillion-dollar scam. That has been documented here on the floor, but

I do not think the people in this country ever really got it. I do not think that they fully understood it.

A summary of the time line, after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations barred him from profiting from sales of his country's vast oil supplies. The ban was meant to keep him from rebuilding his military and pursuing a nuclear weapons program. It also deprived the Iraqi economy of its main export, leading to hunger and deprivation among his people, according to him, a condition that Saddam both exacerbated by hoarding the wealth his country possessed, and then publicized to win international sympathy. Eric Shawn's book points to the fact that a lot of it was just propaganda coming out of Iraq by Saddam that, indeed, a lot of the children that he had claimed were starving to death because of the lack of oil revenues were not, in fact, starving to death. But he won a lot of international sympathy.

So support for the sanctions gradually eroded. And in 1996 the United Nations created the Oil-for-Food program through which Iraq could resume oil sales to pay for humanitarian goods such as food and medicine. Saddam exploited, though, the renewed oil flow in three ways:

First, he simply ignored the sanctions and illegally sold oil to Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and other countries with no U.N. supervision, which furnished him by far his biggest source of illicit income, about $13.6 billion, according to a Senate subcommittee investigation.

Second, Saddam and his loyalists used tricky pricing schemes, surcharges, and kickbacks to milk another $7 billion or more from oil buyers and sellers of humanitarian supplies as a result of Saddam's successful arguments at the United Nations, that as a sovereign nation Iraq should be allowed to negotiate contracts directly.

□ 1745

Legitimate Iraqi oil profits went to a U.N.-controlled escrow account, but kickbacks were secretly routed by complicit companies to hidden regime bank accounts.

And, third, Saddam bribed foreign officials and others. He oversaw a list of people who were given vouchers to buy Iraqi oil at below market price, essentially multimillion dollar buyoffs. Their apparent purpose was to win Saddam defenders in his fight to lift U.N. sanctions. Beneficiaries allegedly included oil company executives from Russia, China and France and prominent politicians from Russia and France.

There is documented evidence now that he systematically sought to use this revenue to buy basically the votes at the United Nations to keep the United Nations from enforcing their own resolutions.

So was the United Nations corrupted through the Oil-for-Food scandal? Absolutely it was. Over a period of a decade, it was corrupted in a gross way, so that the United Nations was never going to enforce their resolutions because basically everybody in the decision-making process had some obligation to Saddam Hussein because of where the money flowed.

Kofi Annan runs the United Nations. Thankfully, his term is going to end at the end of this year. His son, Kojo, his fingerprints are all over this stuff. Money flowed. Investigations have been run. People just looked the other way. Malik Brown then criticizes us for exerting oversight, saying that the United States has just become anti-U.N.

Listen, we all believed in the original legitimacy of the United Nations, the original mission, international peace and security. But I will tell you what, the United Nations is, if anything, not only not helping with international peace and security; the United Nations is in the way today sometimes of international peace and security if they are unwilling to enforce their own resolutions.

You might say, well, you know, if it is not the United Nations, then what? I got to say the coalition of the willing needs to reevaluate, in my humble opinion. The coalition of the willing means countries willing to fight Islamic jihadists, willing to stand strong against terror, willing to engage, to say we have to drive this threat back.

Then what do we do? Let's look at an expanded NATO. Let's look at a coalition of the willing. Or let's insist that the United Nations go back and meet its original charter. It is, frankly, not an organization worthy of this level of support by the American people today. That is the bottom line.

Now, I am prepared to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina, if she is ready. Are you ready?

Ms. FOXX. I am ready.

Mr. WAMP. I yield to VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. WAMP. I appreciate your inviting me to be with you all today. It is a real treat to listen to you and Congressman MCCOTTER. The things you have said I agree with wholeheartedly. I am not nearly as eloquent as the two of you. I am a much more plain-spoken person, I think, a product of having grown up in the mountains of North Carolina, and I think that in many ways you are being very kind about the United Nations.

I agree with you that the United Nations was born in a spirit of optimism and that people had hoped very much that the United Nations could provide peace and stability in the world. And we all want that. We all want that to happen.

But I will tell you, as I talk to my constituents and as they talk to me about the United Nations, even the average American, you don't have to serve in Congress, the average American knows that the United Nations has failed miserably in its role as a peacekeeper in this world. All we have to do is look at what is happening right now in Lebanon, what is happening in Israel, to know that it has failed miserably. We would not be having the problems that we are having in the Middle East if the United Nations were doing its job. I think that it is high time for the Congress and the administration to demand a great deal more from the United Nations.

I think that our Secretary of State is doing a fabulous job in her job, and I think that it was a sad day when we could not get Ambassador Bolton confirmed by the Senate to his job, and I think that the President was right to appoint him on an interim appointment and that he is speaking for the majority of the American people and saying the kinds of things that need to be said.

I want to quote HENRY HYDE. Again, there are very few people in this House who are as eloquent as Chairman HYDE, and I think that it is entirely appropriate that the bill that he introduced, the United Nations Reform Act, was named for him. I want to just quote one quote from him relating to that bill and relating to the United Nations:

''No observer, be they passionate supporter or dismissive critic, can pretend that the current structure and operations of the U.N. represent an acceptable standard. Republican and Democrat administrations alike have long called for a more focused and accountable United Nations. Members on both sides of the aisle agree that the time has come for far-reaching reforms.''

I think that the comments, again, that have been made here by my esteemed colleagues have set the stage for some of the things that we ought to be talking about. The United Nations charter has laudable goals, but, as I said, I am a much more plain-spoken person than some others. But when the rubber meets the road, the U.N. has failed miserably to put these ideals into practice, especially in recent years. And we have a duty here in the Congress and as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, the United States, we have a duty to insist on a higher standard. We have a duty to ensure accountability of each and every American taxpayer dollar that goes to the United Nations.

I know my colleague is going to point out some of the problems with the U.N. ''supervised'' Oil-for-Food Program. But I want to say that from that program, to the lack of action with respect to genocide in Darfur, Sudan, to the tremendous human rights abuses by the U.N. peacekeeping staff during their mission to Congo, the U.N. is absolutely rife with fraud and abuse and needs reform.

We could list these things, and there is a long list, and I am going to talk a little bit about the history of scandals in the United Nations: the Oil-for-Food Program, we will talk a little bit more about; the peacekeeping operations; the Center for Human Settlement or Habitat; Settlement Rehabilitation

Program in Northern Iraq; UNICEF, the U.N. Children's Fund; the Conference on Trade and Development; the Development Program; the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Program; we all know UNESCO; the Electoral Assistance Division, meaning electing people, not electricity; High Commission for Refugees; the Office of Drugs and Crime; the Claims Commission; the Population Fund; and the Environmental Fund. Every one of these programs has had a scandal attached to it.

The American people are much more familiar with the U.N. Oil-for-Food dollars because, fortunately, the popular press and the popular media picked up a little bit on that program and have talked about it. But all of these programs have had scandals associated with them, and I think that just by highlighting this one program, we can give an example of what some of the others are.

I would like to come back in a few minutes and talk about some other issues that have been touched upon by Congressman WAMP, but I am going to turn it back over to him so that he can explain in some detail some of what went wrong with the Oil-for-Food dollars.

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentlewoman.

Put this in perspective: think like North Korea today. Kim Jong Il is defying the international will in terms of developing a nuclear program and nuclear weapons capabilities, so the world is rightly isolating him.

So back in 1990, Saddam Hussein invades his neighbor, and the world comes and drives him back and basically begins to isolate him and he can't sell his oil to the world.

So he comes up with a scheme. Hey, this is what we can do: we can claim that children are starving and that our country is experiencing all these humanitarian crimes, and, as a result, we have got to kick the oil revenues back in.

What happens is the $64 billion worth of oil revenues which Oil-for-Food was supposed to send through a New York escrow account and on back for humanitarian needs, and the administration associated with getting the money back there. And the way the thing ended up getting corrupted, it goes through Jordan and Lebanon and other countries and other accounts and back to Iraq, and this is what happens with the money: military equipment, weapons from Belarus, Bulgaria, China, France, India, Jordan, Russia, Poland, North Korea, South Korea, Syria, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. He bought with all that the military arsenal to put himself back on his feet in the nineties.

And who was co-opted into believing all that? The United Nations, very easily. How were they? Well, kickbacks. Bribes. A methodical effort to make sure that the very people that could expose this or stop this were all somehow on the payroll.

That is exactly what happened. It is one of the most outrageous stories in the history of the world, especially in an organization that most people have a good impression of. After all, when the light-blue flag of the United Nations shows up around the world, people think good thoughts. It is like the American Red Cross. They say, hey, that is nice, they are here. Little do they know, though, that there is this kind of fraud and abuse and corruption at the United Nations.

This is all documented now. We really need to evaluate how long this country is going to participate in a scam like this and then be criticized by the rest of the world every time we try to hold them accountable as being arrogant or too bossy, the things that they say.

Eric Shawn has done this country a service by putting all this in a document, his book, ''The U.N. Exposed.'' He really has. Again, he is just a journalist. He is just trying to show what he learned over the years reporting on the United Nations.

In an interview, they asked him about Iran, because we now know what a threat Iran is. Iran is backing Hezbollah. That is all about this war. And, frankly, Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, has denied that the Jews were ever put through the Holocaust. He says the Holocaust didn't exist, and he wants to end Israel. He wants to destroy Israel. That is a stated objective of the guy running Iran now.

All right. So they asked Shawn about the United Nations and Iran, and he says this: ''The United Nations has given Iran a 21-year head start in its development of nuclear technology, a country whose President now vows to wipe Israel off the map. It seems inconceivable, but the United Nations' own nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, didn't even know about Iran's nuclear facilities for 18 years. Then in 2003, after Iran's program was exposed, Iranian activists and the IAEA confirmed Iran's violations, it took another 3 years for the issue to even reach the Security Council. Russia and China served as Iran's linebackers on the governing board of the agency, refusing to allow Iran's infraction to be reported to the Security Council until earlier this year. The latest IAEA report details Iran's many violations, such as the existence of uranium metal designs that can only be used for nuclear warheads. Moreover, it also raises many unresolved questions about Iran's nuclear capabilities as a whole.

''Despite the crisis, Russia and China, whose economic interests clearly lie in protecting Iran, have already castrated the Security Council by declaring they oppose sanction, creating the impossibility of full council-backed action. Even a legally binding Chapter 7 resolution would not result in a vote for sanctions, a naval blockade or other action against Iran. It may require another coalition of the willing to effectively deal with what the Security Council is unwilling to achieve.''

He says in his book: ''It was not the U.N.'s effort that exposed the extensive global black market in nuclear technology peddled by Pakistan's Dr. A.Q. Khan. No U.N. committee ordered Muammar Qaddafi to surrender his weapons of mass destruction programs. Those successes are among the achievements of the proliferation security initiative, the brainchild of Ambassador John Bolton under the Bush administration. Compare PSI's actual achievements with the U.N.'s failure on the nuclear weapons front. Iran only has to look at Security Council's crippling by Saddam to understand why President Ahmadinejad calls the U.N.'s resolutions meaningless.''

That is the bottom line. Their resolutions are now meaningless. They have no credibility. Our enemies know that they have been co-opted and corrupted and bribed and that they are not going to enforce their resolutions. Iran now knows it. And so they just laugh off anything that the United Nations does.

How dangerous is that? Well, I would say the average citizen, not just in this country but around the world, they have confidence in the United Nations that the United Nations is going to somehow carry out its original charge of international peace and security.

□ 1800

I have been a Member of the United States Congress for 12 years. I am not an expert on these things, but I have studied them and I learned them. I have very little faith in the United Nations to do much of anything on international peace and security.

They do feed people that need to be fed. They do reach humanitarian needs. That is good. But that does not mean all of the other things that they do are good.

As a matter of fact, they are AWOL, AWOL, absent without leave, on the critical issues of terrorism and international security. They will not stand tall.

On the issue of human rights, what a disaster the human rights activities of the United Nations are today. They have put the fox in charge of the hen house. They have let some of the most egregious human rights violating countries play a prominent role in human rights decisions by the United Nations. How absurd is that? I yield to Mr. MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I am very happy, too, with Mr. Shawn producing this book, because I hope it brings light to the problems at the United Nations. I would also like to thank the gentlewoman for her kind remarks about it. Just because we are loquacious does not make us eloquent. And you certainly know how to make your point.

Aside from the international ramifications of the United Nations corruption, it would be very simple for Americans to say, well, what is the problem? We know that the world is not perfect. We know that an amalgamation of nations is not going to always act with

the proper rectitude that is expected or the proper perspicacity that is required under an international crisis.

Many people in my district and throughout America will say to themselves, well, the U.N. is corrupt. That is not news to us. We are not surprised that champagne-sipping, caviar-chomping globalists are making a mess of the jobs that we have entrusted to them.

But there are several points that are important. Even if we are tempted to shut out the ramifications for the world of the United Nations corruption, let us remember that we are paying for it. The United States taxpayers are the largest contributors to the United Nations.

Now, by any objective measurement, this is not a sound investment for the American taxpayers, given the current circumstances occurring at the United Nations, anymore than I would say that in 1900 Tammany Hall was a wise investment for New Yorkers.

My concern also is that these very people, not content with their misfeasance and malfeasance internationally, now wish to do something about your sovereign rights as an American citizen.

The U.N. continues to like to use international treaties, and as many of you know, when the United States signs a treaty, that treaty has more weight than statute, has more weight than State laws. They like to engage in coming up with conventions and conferences to come up with treaties that nations can sign and then be bound by and, consequently, their citizens governed by.

The United Nations has such incentives to deal with your second amendment constitutional rights. They have conventions that they would like you to sign to help reduce your ability to raise your own children as you see fit, to intrude upon every aspect of American life.

I think that that is insane for us to continue to fund an organizations that would like to destroy the Republic's consent to be governed through international convention while they make a nice buck off of doing it, and get to travel to all of the places that they like to frequent and hold these conventions, and, might I point out, not one of them is in Darfur or in North Korea.

The ramifications to the United States taxpayer in terms of their prosperity and in terms of economy of measures by the government, as well as in terms of their inherent sovereignty itself, is endangered by a corrupt organization that is bent on its own aggrandizement at our expense.

It is often frustrating to me, as someone who came out of Wayne County Commission, the Wayne County Government, which is very much like Cook County, Illinois, and politics in Chicago, as one of the few Republicans who got to watch a machine, a political machine at work.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be wise for the United States to continue to subsidize heavily a corrupt political machine. I do not think it is wise for us to subsidize it at all. I think that we should terminate it if it proves that the reforms that we are trying to achieve are impossible.

I think it is imperative that we continue to demand accountability from them. But I think it is also important, as Mr. WAMP from Tennessee and Ms. FOXX from North Carolina and others are trying to do, is to make the American public aware that this is not some esoteric exercise in international law. This is a direct threat to your sovereign, inalienable constitutional rights as an American citizen.

If we do not demand accountability from the United Nations, if we continue to allow the United Nations to believe itself, as a self-aggrandized harbinger and herald of a new world order, then we will feel the ramifications not only in places like North Korea and Iran and Iraq, we will feel those ramifications in Iowa and New Hampshire and Idaho.

That is why we are engaged in this discussion tonight. It is not only to decry and curse the darkness of the past, it is try to light a candle upon the unsavory activities of the United Nations, to try to engage the American public with an awareness of the realties of the consequences to them should U.N. reform not occur; again, in our own way, to try to start the journey of the thousand miles that is U.N. reform, and put that organization back on a track that will serve the people of the United States, that will serve the citizens of other nations, and will again rekindle Franklin Roosevelt's dream for that organization.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his participation and his contributions to our country. He is one of the most articulate Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, very bright man. I am grateful for his leadership. He talked about the U.S. paying 22 percent of the overall dues to the United Nations, and 27 percent of the peacekeeping operations around the world.

You know, China has the same Security Council power at the United Nations as the United States. China pays 2 percent of the United Nations dues. So at the very least, one of the reforms should be Security Council reforms on the balance of power.

Because, frankly, again I have been to the United Nations several times. They do not treat the United States well. And I do not understand why. I know there are a lot of excuses why. But I will tell you this. We are footing the bill and many other countries are not. And the ones that have the same kind of veto power through the Security Council need to be carrying more of the weight, especially when you consider the gross trade imbalance that our country now has with China.

It is not exactly like China needs a lot of help financially, they need to pull their weight. So I am prepared to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WAMP. I appreciate that very much. I would go even farther than you have gone in terms of talking about the amount of money that we have put into the United Nations.

I think that we should lower completely, to a very low amount, what we give to the United Nations. And if we cannot get other nations to increase the amount of money that they give, then I think that we should seriously think about withdrawing from the United Nations altogether.

It is such a corrupt organization. It does so little for what it should be doing, that I think that it is something that we definitely should give some thought to.

I want to go back. You mentioned the Malloch Brown speech. I really want to talk just a little bit about that, because I think that Malloch Brown's speech and the comments that he made are an indication of the fact that the members of the United Nations, people at the United Nations, are totally out of touch with the world.

You described the little spot of ground that the United Nations sits on. I have been there too, went there last year for the second time in my life. I went there as a young person to visit the United Nations, you know, thinking again idealistically about what the United Nations did.

I went there and took my grandchildren to show them the United Nations and get them to get a little bit of sense of what it is. But those people who come here from other countries I think really, really are out of touch. I want to make a couple more comments about what Malloch Brown said. I find it so ironic that he would come in and criticize the American people.

We are the only superpower in world. We are undoubtedly the most successful country in the world. And yet we are criticized by the Malloch Browns of the world, by almost everybody in the United Nations, for what we do. I find it so ironic that we provide so much of the money for the United Nations.

When you look around, you see that we are the most successful country in the world, and how these people can come in and criticize us for what we do. I want to say, our Ambassador Bolton said, it was a criticism of the American people. I think that that is absolutely true.

He criticized our people. I think that that is such an affront to us, and I think the American people understood that as an affront. And he chastised the Bush administration because we had not constructively engaged the American people in what good things the United Nations was doing. He is telling us we are too inadequate to explain that.

Well, the American people are very smart people. We are the smartest people in the world too, I think. They understand, rightfully, if the United Nations was doing what it was supposed

to be doing, its work would stand for itself. That is the kind of thing that we Americans understand.

I think that it is, aside from the fact that he was injecting himself into the political life of this country which he has absolutely no business doing, he really insulted the American people. And he insulted us.

I want to say that my recommendation would be on the United Nations, they are going to come to us and say they need a lot of money to renovate that old building up there. My recommendation is that they take the United Nations to the Sudan. They build a building in the Sudan, and they move the entire United Nations to Africa.

Then I would like to see how many of those people who are currently serving in the United Nations would like to move there and use their expertise to help Africa get out of the poverty that it suffers. I do not think you are going to see many of those people want to go there. They come here and they like to live the life that they live in the United States, but they do not want to respect what we do in the United States and how we have gotten to where we have gotten.

I want to thank Congressman WAMP for bringing this Special Order here tonight. I think you are right. We need to talk about this. What is going on in the Middle East right now is because of the failure of the United Nations, not the failure of the United States, not the failure of the Bush administration, not the failure of President Bush. It is the failure of the United Nations to keep peace in this world.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to keep the pressure on them to reform the way they do things, and if they do not, I think we need to get out.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for all she contributes here in the House of Representatives. Let me say in closing, this is not now a far-out wild kind of a position that we are taking.

You know, I am a very reasonable person, with friends all around the world. The last 12 years I have, through the National Prayer Breakfast and other ways, engaged friends all around the world. I am very much for us being engaged in the world, investing in the world. This is not a close-minded kind of a position. This is not a paranoid position. This is looking at the facts, really analyzing the bottom line of the United Nations. It is not meeting its mission. It has become ineffective, inefficient. It has lost credibility. The very people that are criticizing our country are enjoying the multimillion-dollar townhomes they live in in Manhattan. They enjoy the fruits of our free enterprise system, but they do not recognize the human rights and the responsibility.

The original charge of the United Nations was to ensure international peace and security. So I would just say if we want to be guaranteed international peace and security and sleep comfortably at night, we better not put our faith and trust in the United Nations. Put it in the men and women in the uniform of the Armed Forces of the United States of America and our allies who are willing to stand against tyranny and terror and destruction. That is the last best hope for freedom, not the United Nations.

□ 1815

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House here on this Thursday evening. As you know, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor daily to not only share with Members of the House, but also with the American people, issues that are facing our Nation and things and ideas that we have on this side of the aisle that can assist us in moving this country to a new direction.

Here in the House, as you know, we have been sharing, not only with the Members, but also with the American people a plan for a new direction for America, and a new direction that will be helping a number of Americans in their everyday lives, making sure that we have affordable health care, as it relates to fixing the issue on prescription drugs and as it relates to costs, also dealing with issues such as the minimum wage, making sure that American workers are able to receive an increase, just like we have received an increase here in the House of Representatives over a period of a number of years, year after year. We will talk about that a little further.

As you know, we have a plan here in the House, where we have been not only calling for a vote, but asking the Republicans to join us here and increase the minimum wage.

We want to increase it to $7.25 an hour. It is now $5.15. There are millions of Americans that are still, since 1977, not able to see an increase in minimum wage.

Also cracking down on price gouging, we have talked about that, we have tried to pass legislation on that. The Republican majority has blocked us from being able to do that.

The simple fact is, Mr. Speaker, the majority actually wins here in this House. Right now, that is the Republican majority, and it is important that folks understand that that is the case, and that we have the will and the desire to lead in that area and making sure that American people are able to receive an increase in the minimum wage.

Another issue, in putting America in a new direction, is making sure that we cut costs as it relates to student loans, cut interest rates in half and make sure that it is affordable for families. So many families are going to be sending their children off to college this fall. Some will not, because they can't afford it.

Student loans have gone up. Student aid has gone down. It is important that we look at that as it relates to building the next generation of leaders and making sure that we have an educated America, to make sure that parents and grandparents are able to see their children or grandchildren do better than what we have done academically, because of affordability, and also access.

Also making sure, ensuring that retirees can retire in dignity, protecting Social Security, making sure that it is not privatized, making sure that it is here for future generations is our goal. We want to make sure we are able to do that and being able to place America in a new direction.

Also, something that the Republican majority has failed to do is pay as we go, making sure that whatever we invest in that we show how we are going to pay for it. I think it is very, very important.

Mr. RYAN and I here this evening will point out a number of these issues that are not being addressed. But we have already made a commitment to the American people in housedemocrats.gov, in our commitment of putting America in a new direction, making sure that we meet the needs of everyday working Americans.

So with that, Mr. RYAN, if I can, I would be more than happy to yield to you, sir. It is once again a pleasure to be on the floor with you, to be able to hold a flag with the 30-something Working Group, to make sure that we share with the American people things that we are working on, will try to work on and will, if given the opportunity to, do so.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman. I always enjoy our afternoon sessions here much better than the late night sessions that we normally have.

But you made a point earlier that I think we need to expound upon, that is, the issue of debt and balancing the budget. You mentioned PAYGO.

One of the fundamental issues we need to get our hands around, as the country blesses us with the majority in the fall, is that we have got to figure out what we are going to do with this tremendous debt that we have.

We have, as a country, borrowed more, and you have a great poster up there, we have borrowed more from foreign interests in the last 5 years than every President prior to George W. Bush has in the last 224 or 225 years. That's a lot of money that we owe Japan, China, OPEC countries.

We don't have the money to be giving the tax cuts that we have, war spending, military spending. We don't have that money so we go out and borrow it. It is very important that we will do as a Congress, and the first few days that we are here as a Democratic majority,