''Still, the officials said none of the information was ever pursued, and in a little-noticed statement in July, the office of the Mexican Attorney General, Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, dismissed allegations of money laundering by 'senior commanders of the Army and officials of the Mexican government.'

''Mr. Madrazo said in a telephone interview that the Americans had told him only about unidentified Federal agents and a money laundering scheme involving 'a general who had a daughter'. He said the name of General Cervantes, who has no daughter, was never mentioned.

''With the information that they gave me, Mr. Madrazo asked, what could I possibly have done, gone and looked for a general with a daughter?''

And that was the response that we have out of the Attorney General and other officials of Mexico. So, basically, what this article outlines, and I read it in haste, but I wanted to make sure it was included in the record, what this article and this investigative report outlines is, in fact, we may have corruption at the very highest levels of the Mexican government.

This information is now public. We have known that there was very high levels of corruption. Here there are serious questions raised again that lead to a high minister's office all the way to the office of the President of Mexico.

We also see in this article a situation in which it appears that high United States officials stopped this investigation when it was disclosed that this corruption reached both the top of Mexican cabinet officials and possibly even reached the office of the President of Mexico, President Zedillo.

We also have here evidence tonight that the Mexican military, with whom the United States is confiding with in the war on drugs, is corrupt from the bottom to the very top. We must know who those generals are that are hoarding this kind of money in such an incredible fashion.

What else do we know? Those who reveal the truth about corruption in the Mexican government are found dead, and United States officials who attempt to reveal the truth about corruption are either deterred or they are penalized or they come under close scrutiny.

What else have we learned from this investigative report? United States officials, including the Attorney General, Secretary of State, and others may be risking our national security. And if we are losing 14,200 Americans from the effects of illegal narcotics, and 60 to 70 percent of those hard drugs are coming through Mexico, we know we have a national security problem of a huge proportion.

The information revealed by this New York Times report deserves further investigation. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources of the Committee on Government Reform, I intend to investigate it. We will not be deterred in seeing how high this corruption leads to in the Mexican government. Wherever it may lead us, we will follow it, and we will find out why officials of the United States Government brought these investigations either to a close or did not pursue adequately these investigations with incredible allegations of this magnitude.

We will conduct those hearings and those meetings either in public or behind closed doors.

CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION ON DRUGS

(Mr. SOUDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for a conclusion.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana for his cooperation, for coming out tonight and telling the American people about the situation we face with the corruption in Mexico, about the incredible volume of drugs that are coming across our border through Mexico, and about the apparent coverup and lack of investigation by this administration of corruption at the highest levels of Mexican government.

Mr. Speaker, I simply wished to say that we will hold hearings, we will investigate, and we will pursue this matter to the fullest extent. We will conduct hearings on this. Our subcommittee and other committees of Congress will act, and we will get the facts and information no matter where they lead us.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the gentleman to find the truth. We do not know where the truth lies, but when we make foreign policy decisions on Mexico and China, we do not want to hear about coverups, we want to hear we are actually pursuing every lead to make sure we are doing things in the best national interests of the United States and not just trying to up our trade dollars making decisions otherwise.

I hope all this is false. I hope the top leaders of the Mexican government are completely clean. We need to work with them to eliminate our drug problem, but we have to know what the truth is.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RATEPAYER PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. STEARNS, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce legislation with strong bipartisan support that will not only save American consumers billions of dollars. It will also remove a significant federal barrier to a more competitive electric power industry.

More than 20 years ago, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) was enacted as one of the original components of the Carter Energy Plan. Convinced that we were running out of natural gas and that the price of oil would soar to $100 per barrel or even more by the year 2000, Congress passed PURPA to encourage conservation and promote the use of renewable fuels to generate electricity. It did this by establishing a special class of power generators known as qualifying facilities (''QF's'') and it required utilities to buy all the electricity that these facilities wished to sell at a price determined generally by federal regulators and specifically by state regulators.

Congress sought, in drafting PURPA, to ensure that customers would pay no more for PURPA power than they would have to pay for other power. It did this by providing in PURPA that the maximum price for electricity from QF's would be the cost that the purchase utility would have incurred if it had generated the electricity itself or had purchased it from a source other than the QF. Unfortunately, this has not proven to be the case because government projections of utility avoided costs have been seriously in error. One recent study estimates that PURPA is costing electricity consumers nearly $8 billion a year in excess power costs. Since over 60 percent of PURPA contracts will not expire until after the year 2010, consumers will continue to pay these excess costs well into the future.

PURPA also stands in the way of a more competitive electric industry. By granting special status to some electricity generators, but not others, PURPA encourages the creation of uneconomic projects just to qualify for PURPA benefits. Moreover, PURPA was premised on utilities continuing to be the exclusive suppliers of electricity to all consumers within their franchise territories. In many states today, customers have the ability to choose their own electric supplier. Requiring utilities to purchase new PURPA power when they may no longer have retail customers to whom they can resell power makes no sense.

With 20 years of experience behind us, it is clear that PURPA has outlived its usefulness. My legislation would do three things to reform PURPA: (1) It would prospectively repeal PURPA's mandatory purchase obligation on the date of enactment, so that there would no longer be any new obligations to purchase this power; (2) it would respect the sanctity of existing PURPA contracts; and (3) it would ensure that purchasing utilities would continue to be permitted to recover the costs of existing PURPA contracts as long as these contracts are in effect.

As I said upon introduction of virtually identical legislation during the last two Congresses, my only interest in introducing this bill lies in achieving the most efficient and most cost-effective means of electric generation for America's consumers. While it would prospectively repeal PURPA and would ensure that no new PURPA contracts would be required, it recognizes the legitimate current expectations of QF developers and utility purchasers. I believe that it represents a broad based consensus on this important issue and I would urge that this measure be included in whatever electric industry legislation might be considered by this Congress.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: