

In February of 2000, President Clinton's administration registered their dissatisfaction with Saddam Hussein's government when he complained that approximately \$2 billion was spent to build nine lavish palaces and import liquor and cigarettes under the Oil for Food program.

During the postwar occupation, some very serious allegations have been made regarding people and corporations who circumvented the Oil for Food program by receiving illicit payments from oil surcharges. Among those implicated were U.N. officials administering the Oil for Food program. This was first reported by Al Mada, an independent Iraqi newspaper. Some people and organizations who have been accused have been confirmed in this account to have violated the program. Others have so far denied it.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that a tremendous number of companies signed oil exploration contracts with Iraq that would ultimately have served to undermine any remaining viability of the Oil for Food program. Not surprisingly, the companies predominantly seemed to have come from countries which opposed the liberation of Iraq.

Just this March, the General Accounting Office testified before our own Committee on Financial Services that it believed that Saddam Hussein's regime increased its revenues through illicit activities in the Oil for Food program by approximately \$10.1 billion between 1997 and 2002. These funds were spent to oppress the Iraqi people and provide a lavish lifestyle for the regime's rulers.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. Saddam Hussein engaged in an ongoing circumvention of the Oil for Food program, flouted the U.N. resolutions, persecuted his own people, and was engaged in widespread corruption. He was assisted in these activities by a number of companies and perhaps countries, as well as people within the U.N. bureaucracy itself. This is just one more example that gives credibility to our campaign to remove the regime of terror and replace it with one that truly represents the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Oil for Food program, Iraq was able to successfully advance its foreign policy by offering future contracts to companies for oil exploration, thus receiving a buy-in from other countries, bolstering Saddam Hussein's legitimacy.

The Oil for Food program was suspended just before Operation Iraqi Freedom began on March 19, 2003. The U.N. staff in Iraq departed on March 28, 2003. As U.N. forces moved north towards Baghdad, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1472, restarting the program's operations, empowering the United Nations to take direct control of all aspects of the program, and directing the United Nations to set priorities on the delivery of already contracted supplies. This actually enhanced U.N. authority and then was later extended on June 3, 2003, a re-

markable usurpation of power given the record of the U.N. up to that time administering the program.

On May 22, 2003, Resolution 1483 was adopted, lifting sanctions on Iraq and providing for the phasing out of the Oil for Food program's ongoing operations within 6 months. In accordance with the resolution, the program was terminated on November 21, 2003, and was taken over by the U.S. occupation authority, the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues can be assured that the CPA is now more effectively delivering food and resources to the people of Iraq than Saddam Hussein ever did. Today, Iraqi resources are being used for the Iraqi people for the first time in decades. Our achievements are impressive in this area and should demonstrate our commitment to the people of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would once again call for a full and thorough investigation of the expenditures of all funds involved in the Oil for Food program. The corruption was so deep in the Saddam Hussein administration and in those countries, companies and international institutions that propped up the regime, I am convinced that we will not like what we discover.

IRAQ ABUSES MAY GO UNPUNISHED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to suspend your emotions for a moment and look closely at the pictures from Iraq. The Americans appear to be dressed about the same, but there is one major difference. Some of the photos include U.S. soldiers and U.S. civilian contractors. In fact, in one photo the civilian contractors are turned away from the camera. Maybe they were trying to protect themselves. From what?

Some of the U.S. soldiers involved will face a military court martial. The civilian contractors will not face a military court or an Iraqi court or an American court. Civilian contractors involved may not face any punishment thanks to the Pentagon.

Secretary Rumsfeld outsourced the President's war. He outsourced the checks and balances. He outsourced the chain of command. He outsourced due process.

The Pentagon wrote an order that specifically protects civilian contractors from prosecution in Iraq for crimes committed under the umbrella of official duties, and if a civilian contractor commits a crime while off duty in Iraq, U.S. Administrator Paul Bremer has to agree in writing to local prosecution. Does that sound like the United States? Is this the model of democracy we are trying to install in Iraq? Does this sound like adhering to the Geneva Convention?

Last week, the Attorney General rushed to the microphones to tell America that he can prosecute civilians implicated in Iraqi crimes, but the Attorney General neglected to tell the American people that not a single FBI agent has been dispatched to Iraq to investigate. Not one. When two U.S. embassies were bombed in Africa during the Clinton administration, 900 FBI agents went to the scene. The Attorney General says he will wait until the Pentagon finishes its investigation. What is he waiting for?

The International Red Cross has been sounding the alarm for over a year, but the administration and its war machine turned a deaf ear and a deaf eye to what was happening. Now the United States and every soldier is paying the price for benign neglect.

Civilians were given authority to interrogate, clearly using any and all means. Civilians had some mission control over U.S. soldiers, and they exploited this control.

Civilians were immune from local prosecution and immune from military chain of command. We know there has been torture and likely even murder; yet some soldiers were involved, but we cannot stop there and pretend that is the end of it.

There are thousands of civilian contractors in Iraq. We owe it to every good and decent American soldier to get to the worst black mark in military history. We must know what role, secret or otherwise, the civilians were playing in the war. What else were they given besides protection? What secret orders are they carrying out? Who is accountable for the civilians? What assurances will the Iraqi people have that any civilian implicated will be brought to justice? How can we say that we stand for freedom if we let the criminals go free?

The U.S. military told the administration before the war that hundreds of thousands of troops would be needed. The administration refused to listen. Instead, the administration deployed a hand-over strategy concerning Iraq. The administration handed over critical duties to people outside the military and then protected them.

The administration keeps talking about handing over Iraq on June 30. They have already handed over to the wrong people. We need to get back in control of what is going on in Iraq. This administration has got to come clean on what those contractors were hired to do, by whom, and who supervises them.

Are there bosses in Virginia that run those companies? Are they exempt, too? Is nobody responsible for the interrogations that went on in that prison or in the other prisons in Iraq?

These are the questions that must be answered by this administration, and I am afraid that if Mr. Rumsfeld does not want to do it, he is going to have to go.