

Cross see and the world know if the prisoner abuses have stopped.

Do not tell the world the administration supports the Geneva Convention. Do it by following the Geneva Convention. One call, Mr. Speaker, is all it would take for the President to let the Red Cross in and the world know. Our soldiers deserve nothing less. Our Nation demands nothing more than the truth.

We only have 112 days left of this administration, but that is a long time if you are serving in Iraq under a stop loss order. The President has got to act to protect our people.

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

(Mr. BURTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

OIL-FOR-FOOD SCANDAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, the Oil-for-Food fraud is possibly the largest scandal in the history of the United Nations and one of the greatest financial scandals of modern times. Set up in the mid-1990s as a means of providing humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, the U.N.-run Oil-for-Food program was subverted and manipulated by Saddam Hussein's regime, allegedly with complicity of U.N. officials to help prop up the Iraqi dictator.

Saddam's dictatorship was able to siphon off an estimated \$10 billion from the program through oil smuggling and systematic thievery by demanding illegal payments from companies buying Iraqi oil and through kickbacks from those selling goods to Iraq, all under the noses of U.N. bureaucrats.

Members of the U.N. staff that have administered the program have been accused of gross incompetence, mismanagement, and possible complicity with the Iraqi regime. Benon Sevan, former executive director of the Oil-for-Food program appeared on an Iraqi oil minister list of 270 individuals, political entities and companies from across the world that allegedly received oil vouchers as bribes from Saddam Hussein's regime.

The U.S.'s General Accounting Office estimates that the Saddam Hussein re-

gime generated \$10.1 billion in illegal revenues by exploiting the Oil-for-Food program. These figures include \$5.7 billion from oil smuggling and \$4.4 billion in illicit surcharges on sales and after-sales charges on suppliers.

Without a shred of evidence, European and domestic critics have frequently derided the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq as an oil grab driven by U.S. corporations such as Halliburton. They ignore the reality that the leading opponents of war at the U.N. Security Council, Russia and France, had vast oil interests in Iraq protected by the Saddam Hussein regime.

The Oil-for-Food program and its elaborate system of kickbacks and bribery are a major source of revenue for many European politicians and business concerns, especially in Moscow.

Mr. Speaker, the role of Congress should include first of all the strengthening of the Paul Volcker Commission of Inquiry. It should ensure that the Iraqi interim government and congressional investigators are able to conduct an effective and exhaustive investigation in the Oil-for-Food program. It should push the administration to ensure that the Oil-for-Food scandal is thoroughly investigated. It should keep the international spotlight on Oil-for-Food, encouraging foreign governments to launch their own investigations. It should increase the likelihood of serious reform at the U.N., including significant safeguards to prevent repetitions of its failures. It should limit the role of the United Nations in shaping the future of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the most effective way to ensure that the United Nations fully cooperates with its own commission of inquiry, which has received veiled threats if it continues to probe, the most effective way that we in the United States can deal with that inability to do its own investigation is threaten to reduce funding from the U.S. to the U.N., specifically the United States's assessed contribution.

Mr. Speaker, the U.N.'s dismal and allegedly corrupt handling of the Oil-for-Food program should lay to rest any notion that the organization can be entrusted with shaping the future of the Iraqi people. Many Iraqis regard the U.N. with suspicion, lacking both legitimacy and credibility.

Iraqis have bitter memories of Secretary General Annan's February 1998 statement to reporters, "Can I trust Saddam Hussein? I think I can do business with him," said Mr. Annan.

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The Benon Sevan letters give us evidence that the former director of the Oil-for-Food Program interfered with congressional investigations. Specifically, Sevan wrote several letters on official U.N. stationery warning some of the companies implicated in the scandal that they must first seek U.N. approval before releasing documents to investigators.

Mr. Speaker, the Security Council had heated debates over whether the U.S.-led war to liberate Iraq should proceed, but the resistance in the Security Council cannot remain separated from the Oil-for-Food scandal and the fact that influential politicians, major companies and political parties from key Security Council member countries may have benefited financially from the program.

The Al Mada list of 270 individuals, political entities and businesses across the world that allegedly received oil vouchers included no fewer than 46 Russian and 11 French names. The Russian Government alone allegedly received an astonishing \$1.36 billion in oil vouchers.

The close ties between Russian and French politicians and the Iraqi regime may have been an important factor in influencing their governments' decision to oppose Hussein's removal from power.

Mr. Speaker, this Oil-for-Food scandal must come to the attention of the American public, and if it is only Republicans who will address it, we will do so.

SMART SECURITY AND POSTPONEMENT OF NOVEMBER ELECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, DeForest Soaries, chairman of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and a Bush appointee, and I emphasize "and a Bush appointee," asked Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge to consider seeking the authority to postpone a Federal election. Specifically, he wants Ridge to push for legislation that will give his agency the authority to reschedule the November 2 Presidential election in the event of a terrorist threat or attack sometime near the election.

As a result of his request, the Department of Homeland Security asked the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel to analyze what steps would need to be taken to postpone this year's Presidential election, what steps would need to be taken to postpone this year's Presidential election.

Mr. Speaker, this is nothing short of outrageous. I am appalled that this request is even being considered. The postponement of a Presidential election would present the greatest threat to date to our democratic process. It would be an admission of defeat to the terrorists, inviting them to disrupt this election of our highest leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the gentlewoman and wish to point out the fact that during the War Between the States the Presidential election continued on.