

organizations, church leaders, and others who have continued to break down the barriers and glass ceilings that have prevented the integration of the business and financial communities of America.

There was particular focus in the article on the Reverend Charles H. Ellis III, Bishop of Greater Grace Temple in Detroit, who partnered with the PepsiCo Urban Development Program. This corporate outreach program provides a variety of services and transportation, facilitating seniors in their everyday living by providing local visits to the homes of their family and friends, the shopping center, the doctor's office, the bank, and other places of need or interest.

There are many other corporations that deserve honorable mention and those of us who are members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the Progressive Caucus salute those companies who realize their responsibility to continue to democratize the world's most powerful economy that has been developed by this great country.

50 BEST COMPANIES FOR MINORITIES

You can slow down the economy, but you can't slow down progress. Anyone who believed that corporate America's devotion to diversity would wilt in the face of hard times should take a look at this year's Top 50. It has outdone the 2002 list across the board.

How about some good news for a change? In this year's 50 Best Companies for Minorities list, we saw minority representation rising in nearly every category we evaluate. People of color make up 19% of boardrooms, vs. 18% last year and 11% in 2001; management grew more diverse—26% of officials and managers are minorities, an increase over last year's 24% (up more than 50% from the inaugural list in 1998). Those improvements are mirrored in other areas—purchasing from minority-owned firms increased to 9% of the total purchasing budget, from 7% last year, while some areas, like diversity training and charitable contributions to minority organizations, held steady.

As in the past, we compiled our list by contacting the FORTUNE 1,000, plus the 200 largest privately held U.S. companies; 141 responded to our survey. Our questionnaire delves into all aspects of diversity. We ask how well people of color are represented in the general workforce but, more important, how many are among the most senior officials and highest-paid employees. And we ask if they're being promoted into management at the same rates as white employees. Other questions relate to the company's culture. Are managers held financially accountable for meeting diversity goals? How successfully have people of color been integrated into succession plans? We look at the way companies interact with the wider community. How strong are their purchasing programs with minority-owned businesses? Have they used minority-owned underwriters or pension-management firms? What portion of corporate charity goes to programs benefiting people of color? The data undergo a statistical evaluation and are then synthesized to produce our list: Voilà, the 50 Best for 2003.

QUESTIONING THE CASE FOR WAR

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, many questions are swirling around the country about whether President Bush and members of his Administration knowingly misled the American people into believing that Iraq was an imminent threat to our security and that we had no choice but to invade and occupy that nation. That is why I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to an editorial that appeared in today's Chicago Tribune, entitled "Questioning the Case for War."

The editorial states: "Instead of dodging questions and branding critics 'revisionist historians,' Bush must cooperate with congressional inquiries and diligently work to set the record straight. Bush has enjoyed the patience and the support of a majority of the American public. But that patience can run thin."

It continues, "The American people deserve a full accounting of the evidence. Were mistaken assertions based on faulty intelligence reports or was there a deliberate effort to trump up evidence to make the case for war?"

For the sake of his credibility, President Bush "must put to rest any suspicions that Americans accepted an argument for war that was built on a lie," the editorial concludes.

The American people deserve answers and that is why I strongly support H.R. 2625, a bill sponsored by Representative WAXMAN that would establish an independent commission to respond to the questions raised today by the Chicago Tribune. We need to get to the truth. President Bush's credibility and America's standing in the world are at stake.

[From the Chicago Tribune, July 10, 2003]

QUESTIONING THE CASE FOR WAR

Like any good salesman, President Bush highlighted the facts that made the most compelling case as he sold the American people on the urgent need for war against Iraq. In his State of the Union address in January, he spoke of 38,000 liters of the deadly botulinum toxin and as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent—all unaccounted for by Saddam Hussein. He spoke of Hussein's continued quest to build nuclear weapons.

He and his administration made the case forcefully for months, at the United Nations and elsewhere, using an impressive array of intelligence reports and satellite photos. Many Americans were convinced, as was this editorial page.

For several weeks, however, the case that Bush & Co. made has been coming under intense scrutiny, with suggestions that the president deliberately exaggerated some evidence or misrepresented intelligence reports to gild the arguments for war.

After weeks of denying those charges, the White House acknowledged Monday that one of the president's points in his State of the Union address may have been mistaken. That claim: that Hussein had attempted to buy uranium for a nuclear weapon from a nation in Africa.

White House officials wouldn't say how the president came to use the erroneous information or when he knew that the assertion was probably wrong. Bush and his team didn't fess up voluntarily. They were compelled to respond to an account in Sunday's New York Times by Joseph Wilson, a former American

ambassador who was enlisted by the CIA last year to travel to Niger to investigate claims that Hussein had tried to buy the uranium.

Wilson wrote that he found no evidence for those claims and shared his skepticism in briefings with the CIA and other agencies. Nevertheless, almost a year later, Bush cited that information in his speech. Top officials, including National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, deny that they or the president knew of Wilson's findings before he delivered the speech.

But Wilson wrote that "Based on my experience . . . I have little choice but to conclude that some of the intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat."

That is a logical—and deeply disturbing—conclusion.

The African uranium claim is not the only statement in question. The president asserted that Hussein had attempted to buy high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production. That claim was disputed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and now is widely viewed as doubtful. The Pentagon has acknowledged that a Defense Intelligence Agency study last December couldn't pinpoint evidence of Iraqi weapons sites, though administration pronouncements at the time seemed far more certain of their existence.

With all those questions, it's natural to wonder what other errors—intentional or not—crept into the president's case for war. Prime Minister Tony Blair faces similar scrutiny in Britain.

Bush insists that those who raise such questions are ignoring the preponderance of the evidence, which clearly showed Hussein posed a threat to the world. There was, indeed, a strong case, starting with Hussein's longstanding defiance of U.N. resolutions and cat-and-mouse game with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Bush also complains that this debate is charged with political partisanship. Yes, in some quarters, it surely is.

But Bush seriously miscalculates if he chalks up the rising din of questions only to those who opposed the war. This debate goes to the president's most precious asset: his credibility.

The American people deserve a full accounting of the evidence. Were mistaken assertions based on faulty intelligence reports or was there a deliberate effort to trump up evidence to make the case for war?

It's time for the administration to scrub down every piece of evidence it made public and level with the American public about what, if anything, was exaggerated to make the case for war. Instead of dodging questions and branding critics "revisionist historians," Bush must cooperate with congressional inquiries and diligently work to set the record straight.

Bush has enjoyed the patience and the support of a majority of the American public. But that patience can run thin.

Americans know the hunt for weapons of mass destruction isn't over yet. They realize that no intelligence report is perfect; that such reports can be misleading or flat-out wrong. They understand that mistakenly using a faulty intelligence report does not automatically lead to the conclusion that much of the evidence for war was twisted or intentionally misused.

But they also know a too-slick sales job when they see one. History is full of presidents who fudged facts to advance objectives—be it declaring a war or more mundane domestic matters.

These questions will not fade. If anything, as the presidential campaign heats up, these kinds of questions will only grow louder.

If some of the intelligence Bush used was faulty or incomplete—as it seems to have

been—he should say so and explain why. If he made mistakes, he should admit them. Bluster and bravado will not suffice. He must put to rest any suspicions that Americans accepted an argument for war that was built on a lie.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EMERGENCY DIRECTED RAIL SERVICE ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Emergency Directed Rail Service Act. We have now reached a point almost exactly one year after Amtrak's last shutdown threat. Only an emergency "loan" under the otherwise crippled Railroad Rehabilitation Finance (RRIF) program and an emergency appropriation prevented Amtrak from shutting down, stranding thousands of commuters on and off the Northeast Corridor, and ending freight service on the Corridor. (The "loan"—supposedly for 90 days—has not been repaid to this day.)

Based on last year's threat, I introduced an earlier version of this bill, to provide a "safety net" of emergency directed service powers under the auspices of the Surface Transportation Board if Amtrak did shut down. Such a threat is still present. Amtrak has pending funding requests far in excess of the President's budget request and has made no significant structural or financial changes in the last year. Thus the nation's commuter railroads and freight service on the Northeast Corridor are still hostages to a new shutdown threat.

This legislation is intended to prepare the nation for the possibility that Amtrak will either repeat its prior threat, or that Amtrak's precarious financial situation will cause an involuntary cessation of service. This bill is part of my effort to make sure the country is as prepared as possible should any such shutdown occur.

I am particularly concerned about the effect on freight movements in the Northeast and on commuter operations around the country and consequently on our national economy. An Amtrak shutdown could adversely affect the economy in the Northeast United States, because considerable freight would not be able to get to its destination—especially plants where the Northeast Corridor is the only rail access. Moreover, commuters in the Northeast and around the country may not be able to get to work, either because the commuter authority operates on Amtrak infrastructure or because the commuter authority uses Amtrak employees to operate or maintain its trains.

Last year, before introducing the predecessor of this bill, I wrote to Linda Morgan, the then Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, and asked whether the Board had the power to direct freight and commuter service that would be adversely affected by an Amtrak shutdown. Ms. Morgan responded that the STB was unclear whether it would have the power to direct freight and commuter service in the event of an Amtrak shutdown and that its emergency powers have "never been test-

ed before in this context . . . and . . . could be challenged in court."

This country needs someone to have the power to address the fallout on freight railroads and commuters if Amtrak shuts down. The legislation I introduce today does just that. It makes it clear that the STB has the authority it needs to act in the event Amtrak ceases service.

In particular, the bill would give the STB the authority to order the continued maintenance, signaling, and dispatching of the Northeast Corridor. It would give the STB the authority to use federal funds to compensate the entity that conducts these services and to indemnify it with respect to any increased liability exposure. It would also authorize the STB to direct service and to provide interim financial assistance to commuter operations around the country affected by an Amtrak shutdown.

Further, current law requires that to the extent possible the Amtrak employees who already perform the work should do the work required by the directed service. The bill I introduce today would not change that requirement.

The nation may have narrowly avoided a rail transportation crisis last year, but there is no guarantee that we will not see a recurrence. Given the precarious financial situation of Amtrak, it would be irresponsible not to put a "safety net" of appropriate emergency powers in place. If Amtrak manages to recover, this legislation will prove to be very inexpensive insurance under which no claim had to be made. But if Amtrak shuts down, having this insurance in place will prove to be the wisest of investments.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2658) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004 and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the very important FY04 Department of Defense appropriations bill. In my opinion, some of the most important provisions in this bill are the pay increases for our men and women in uniform. H.R. 2658 provides an average pay increase of 4.1 percent for military personnel in FY 2004 and provides targeted pay hikes of up to 6.3 percent for a variety of other personnel.

Another issue of great importance also included in this appropriations bill is funding for the BRAC process. From 1995 to 2000 Congress intentionally refused to authorize another round of BRAC. Only in late 2001 did the Senate add the controversial provision to the FY02 Defense Authorization Act, authorizing the fifth BRAC for 2005. The House-passed authorization bill did not include any such BRAC provision, but in December 2001, the House finally approved the Conference

Report to the FY02 Defense Authorization bill with the Senate's BRAC provision included.

The first significant steps in implementing the new 2005 base closure law were formally announced by Secretary Rumsfeld on November 15, 2002. These included development of a force structure plan, conducting a comprehensive inventory of military installations, and establishing criteria for selecting bases for closure or realignment. Secretary Rumsfeld further stated that he felt another round of base closures would be necessary in light of his efforts to undergo a military transformation to a quicker, sleeker fighting force.

Although I have not found much common ground recently with the President and Secretary Rumsfeld, in this case I do. As such, I plan to vote against Mr. HOSTETTLER's amendment to preclude the use of funds provided by this bill to proceed with the BRAC process. In addition, the veto threat issued by the President if this amendment passes should be heeded considering the importance of the funding for the DOD.

With that said, I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong support for Cannon Air Force Base, located in my district. Not only do I strongly support Cannon remaining open through the 2005 round of closings, but I have every confidence that it will, in fact, remain open.

Cannon Air Force Base and the men and women who serve there are an integral part of New Mexico, the Clovis community immediately surrounding it, and an integral component of our national defense. In addition, Cannon's pilots have an excellent training space, the Melrose Bombing Range, very close by. Cannon has no encroachment, and is surrounded by open space.

In the past, I have worked very hard to ensure that Cannon's facilities are worthy of the high-caliber personnel who use them. I have worked with my colleagues in the New Mexico delegation to secure funding through the Military Construction Appropriations bill for several worthy projects at the base. I have every intention of continuing to work to secure funding for the facilities there that are currently substandard to further shield this important component of our national defense from being closed.

Mr. Chairman, for the reasons I have outlined above, I will vote against Mr. HOSTETTLER's amendment. I urge my colleagues to do the same. However, I do support passage of the underlying bill, as it provides important funding for our brave men and women in the Armed Forces.

IN HONOR OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ESPERANZA, INC. AND THEIR 13TH ANNUAL FIESTA OF HOPE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Esperanza, Inc. of