

of laughable fakes, would the claim that Saddam Hussein was making a secret effort to acquire hundreds of tons of uranium oxide from Niger have been something to stake a life-and-death decision on?

Niger is a small country in West Africa, about the size of Rio de Janeiro in population. They have been mining uranium since 1970. There are two mines that produce uranium.

□ 2045

Both mines are run by an international consortium that includes Japanese, German, Spanish and French interests. Both mines are closely monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. There is nothing, nothing that could lead an objective observer to believe that Iraqi agents would slip into Niger, make a deal, and slip out again without somebody in the tiny expatriate community noticing and mentioning to Dr. El Baradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In fact, a distinguished retired American diplomat, Joe Wilson, spent more than a week in Niger sniffing around for any hint that the story might be true and found absolutely nothing.

It is simply not believable that this tiny, highly regulated industry in this tiny, sparsely populated country could have or would have violated IAE rules and broken U.N. sanctions to sell uranium oxide to Hussein. There are plenty of legitimate customers.

So why did the administration decide to believe it? Because of the overwhelming evidence? Hardly.

Last week Secretary of State Powell gave the following ringing defense to the President's claim: "There was sufficient evidence floating around at the time that such a statement was not totally outrageous."

Well, there you have it. It was obvious to anyone who looked into it carefully that Niger had neither the means nor the motive to sell uranium to Iraq. It was obvious. It was reported. And it was known. And yet the Secretary of State said, people of his stature thought it was not totally outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, actually it was totally outrageous. The President and the Congress are sworn to protect the United States of America. This is our most solemn duty. The question, and it is the only question that matters, is this: Did the threat posed by Saddam Hussein rise to the level of an imminent threat to national security or even to a grave and gathering danger? So far nothing leads to that conclusion.

There can be little argument about whether the people of Iraq are better off today than they were under Hussein. They are. But the 200 young Americans who have died and continue to die, one died last night, did not pledge their lives to make the people of Iraq better off. They pledged to protect the United States of America from real threats to our security. They died believing that they did. So far, I do not

know why they died. We should find out.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT HURTS CHILDREN

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

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the so-called School Readiness Act of 2003, H.R. 2210. This bill does not provide the adequate funding for Head Start or for the much-needed expansion of early Head Start and migrant and seasonal Head Start programs.

H.R. 2210 begins an irreversible process of dismantling Head Start by promoting religious discrimination in hiring, shortchanging teachers, and denying services to eligible children by continuing to underfund Head Start.

Nearly 4 decades of research have established that Head Start delivers the intended services and improves the lives and development of the children and families that it serves. To illustrate how effective Head Start can be, let me tell you about one of my constituents.

Ms. Robles is a single mother with three children. She works full time while her children attend school. Pablo, the youngest of her three children, has been fortunate enough to participate and be enrolled in the Head Start program. Before Pablo started Head Start, he was quiet and withdrawn, a very shy boy who was very much dependent upon his mother. Pablo is now a confident and expressive little boy. He wants to do things independently and enjoys playing puzzles and building blocks.

Ms. Robles told me, "The transformation in Pablo is amazing. I see the difference in Pablo and my other two children who were not lucky enough to participate in Head Start."

In addition, Ms. Robles is grateful to Head Start because of the services it provides. She receives help from the social workers, including the emotional support she needed ever since leaving her family and friends behind in her country to make a new start in the United States. The nurses and teachers who participate in Head Start are also attentive and helpful to her and her children. Ms. Robles now feels she is a better mother to her children at home and a more prepared parent advocate to her children in school.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill that skimps on children, H.R. 2210. As the old saying goes, if it ain't broke, why fix it.

Let us not play with the future of our most vulnerable children like Pablo Robles.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

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

There was no objection.

FUND MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAMS

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the comments that my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), just finished. Today I would like to deal with one specific aspect of H.R. 2210 dealing with Head Start and that specific aspect has to do with an effort that this House must undertake to provide true relief to the impoverished children of migrant and seasonal farm working families.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs successfully provide the infants and children of migrants and seasonal workers in this country with educational and health related services. These services and these support services provided by Migrant and Seasonal Head Start keep children out of the fields where they are exposed to pesticides, hazardous equipment, extreme heat and other related health dangers.

Unfortunately, a severe funding shortfall leaves more than 80 percent of these eligible children without these vital services and protection.

According to the study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Migrant and Seasonal

Head Start programs serve just 19 percent of eligible migrant and seasonal children. By comparison, the regional Head Start programs serve approximately 60 percent of their eligible population. This shortfall leaves 130,000 children of migrant and seasonal workers and their families out of any opportunity in a Head Start program. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs serve both infants and toddlers. Early Head Start funds are only available to full-year programs and thus leave the migrant and seasonal programs to provide full-day services to both infants and toddlers without the benefit of extra program funds or technical assistance funds.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start is already spreading its funds thin in order to sustain these programs and serve these very needy kids.

Migrant and seasonal programs are funded out of a 13 percent set-aside in the Head Start annual appropriations along with Indian Head Start, children with disabilities, training and technical assistance, program review, and research and demonstrations. Over the last 8 years, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have consistently received 4 percent or less of the Head Start annual appropriations.

The Republican Head Start bill now includes an amendment that claims to assist migrant and seasonal children. This addition, however, would take money away from popular training and technical assistance programs and provide only a marginal increase in funds to these needy children, less than a 1 percent increase in funding to address the needs of over 130,000 children that are neglected by this bill. Moreover, this formula provides no guaranteed funding to eligible migrant and seasonal children. It is a year-to-year gimmick, and what we need and these children need is a real and reliable increase in resources and a revenue source for these services.

Based on current program funding, it would cost almost an additional \$750 million to achieve near parity between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and regional Head Start. Completely closing this funding gap between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and regional Head Start may be unrealistic in the near future, but the recommendations are designed to move the programs toward parity by making a modest increase in funding for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs.

Today, before the Committee on Rules, I proposed an amendment that would help solve this problem in a substantial way. My proposal would increase funds sufficient to provide services to an additional 10,000 children of migrant and seasonal working families. The proposal would also stabilize funding for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start with the floor of 5 percent of the total appropriation. This amendment was drafted in such a way that it would have no negative effect on any other

Head Start program. It would not take resources from any other community or any other program in Head Start.

Though migrant and seasonal families are seemingly an invisible population, a population that puts food on our tables, a population that many times does not have the political attention or the voice in this House, they deserve equal access to the social services we provide other children suffering from poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to listen to their consciences and join in my attempts to provide this relief to a neglected population in this country, a population of children that is left behind, continues to be left behind; and we have a historic opportunity to include them with the rest of the children of this country.

HUSSEIN HIDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I have heard tonight several concerns about our ability to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and whether that indicates the prewar intelligence on Iraq's program was either incorrect or biased.

Where those weapons are today falls into several categories. Of course, they could still be hidden. Saddam had become a master of concealment. Please remember that in 1995 the United Nations was preparing to lift sanctions believing that Iraq had disarmed. It was only the defection of Saddam's son-in-law and the revelations that significant weapons were present that halted the U.N. from lifting those sanctions.

Perhaps Saddam did destroy the weapons after the inspectors left in 1998. Why in the world then given the costs to him would he not be forthcoming about that?

Please remember the burden of proof is clearly still on Saddam, not the United States, not the President of the United States or the United Nations to demonstrate that the destruction of weapons had occurred. Possibly the weapons had degraded over time or were destroyed in the bombing; but again, why would Saddam not be forthcoming and say so?

I believe Congress is exercising its oversight authority and has set in place procedures to review comprehensively and on a bipartisan basis the intelligence surrounding Iraq prior to the outbreak of the war and to take into account any of the dissident views on the Iraq threat within the intelligence community.

The United States Armed Forces are still trying to pacify sectors of Iraq and deal with daily attacks on U.S. soldiers west and north of Baghdad. People who have lived in a police state with no freedom of speech are unlikely to vol-

unteer information until stability and security are achieved in Iraq.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it became apparent that the United States needed to be more vigilant about terrorism and weapons proliferation, and pay particular attention to the prospect of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of groups or states that would use them against American interests, either at home or abroad. While Saddam Hussein had been essentially "contained" within Iraq for a dozen years, by 2002 it was clear that the sanctions designed to prevent him from re-arming had fallen apart. More and more foreign countries were trading with Iraq in defiance of the United Nations (UN) sanctions. There was also widespread international agreement that Hussein had not given up his efforts to acquire banned weapons.

Iraq's expulsion of UN weapons inspectors had made it virtually impossible to monitor his activities. Most governments around the world—and the United Nations itself—believed Hussein's Iraq had not disarmed itself of the lethal weapons it was known to have possessed. In early 2003, the United Nations confirmed that Iraq had hidden its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs, built missiles exceeding the range limits set by the Security Council, and failed to cooperate with inspectors. Instead of disarming, Iraq responded with false claims and empty declarations.

The Bush Administration, the Clinton Administration, and the United Nations all agree that Hussein possessed a significant biological and chemical capability in 1998 when the inspectors were withdrawn. There is broad agreement that Hussein, different from any other leader, had proven himself capable of using these weapons for offensive purposes and not merely in a defensive posture.

Where those weapons are today falls into one of several categories:

1. They are hidden—Hussein has become a master of concealment. Please remember in 1995 the United Nations was preparing to lift sanctions believing that Iraq had disarmed. It was only the defection of Hussein Kamel and the revelation that significant weapons were present that halted the UN from lifting the sanctions.

2. Hussein did destroy the weapons after the inspectors left in 1998. While this is unlikely given his other behavior, the burden of proof was clearly still on Hussein—not the United States, nor President Bush, and not the United Nations—to demonstrate the destruction of weapons had occurred.

3. The weapons had degraded over time or were destroyed in the bombing or looted during the combat phase of Iraqi Freedom.

The American soldiers who fought in Iraq did so with skill, determination and bravery in the face of grave dangers. Their conquest of Iraq was a rapid, overwhelming success; and victory was attained with relatively limited civilian casualties or damage to Iraq's infrastructure. All Americans can be proud of the performance of our armed forces in Iraq and we can unite in honoring the memory of those courageous soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect their fellow Americans.

The United States has had a positive impact since the military operation in Iraq. A brutal dictator has been removed. The revelation of mass graves in Iraq has only confirmed what