

OIL-FOR-FOOD CREDIBILITY

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member agrees with the sentiments expressed in an April 12, 2004, Lincoln Journal Star editorial entitled "Credibility at Stake in Probe of Oil-for-Food." This Member commends the article to his colleagues.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, Apr. 12, 2004]

CREDIBILITY AT STAKE IN PROBE OF OIL-FOR-FOOD

If the United Nations is to retain credibility as an effective force in international affairs, it cannot afford a slipshod and superficial investigation into its handling of the oil-for-food program.

Rumors of corruption in the program have been floating around for years, but more specific charges have been leveled recently.

The charges are especially troubling at a time when the United Nations is being encouraged to take a larger role in the stabilization of Iraq.

The oil-for-food program, established and operated by the United Nations, was begun in 1996 to ease hardship imposed on ordinary Iraqi citizens by economic sanctions. Under its guidelines, Iraq was allowed to sell oil to buy goods that had humanitarian purposes, such as food and medicine.

Iraq sold about \$67 billion worth of oil before the program ended, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office.

The program was set up to pay for itself. The United Nations earned a 3 percent commission. Most of the money went to cover the United Nations' costs, and the remainder was to go to the weapons inspection program.

But GAO officials said recently that Saddam Hussein's government pocketed more than \$10 billion in proceeds from oil sales. About \$5.7 billion came from oil smuggled to its neighbors. Another \$4.4 billion came from illegal surcharges and kickbacks on legitimate contracts.

Several months ago, an Iraqi newspaper said it had documented proof that oil revenue was diverted to more than 200 businesses, organizations and individuals, including French and Russian politicians and Benon Sevan, the U.N. official who ran the oil-for-food program.

U.N. officials attempted and succeeded in blocking some of the smuggling ventures, but the recent charges portray the corruption as much more extensive than previously suspected. One of the ticklish aspects of the corruption charges is that U.N. General Secretary Kofi Annan's son, Kojo, worked for one of the companies that are implicated in the scandal. Suggestions that Kojo Annan was involved in the corruption seem dubious, however, since he left the company before it became involved with the program.

Kofi Annan initially was slow to respond to the new charges, but he won U.N. Security Council permission last month to establish an independent investigation into the charges. The approval was less than enthusiastic, however. Russia agreed only to "take note" of the investigation.

The United Nations has filled an invaluable role over the years in addressing humanitarian problems and helping to resolve conflicts.

In order to retain the trust of the international community, the United Nations must be willing to thoroughly investigate

these charges of corruption. If results warrant, the international organization also must take decisive action against any of its own officials who may have been involved.

COMMENDING THE ATHLETES, ORGANIZERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FANS OF THE DODGE TOUR DE GEORGIA

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, this week Georgians will line the roads to witness the top ranked stage road bicycle race in North America.

The Dodge Tour de Georgia promotes tourism, stimulates local industry, and is proud to benefit the Georgia Cancer Coalition. The race serves as a rolling festival to entertain and educate spectators across the Peach State about cycling, fitness, and most importantly about the possibility for a cure for and the prevention of cancer. This second annual event, April 20 to 25, 2004, takes pro cyclists and multitudes of visitors on a scenic 641-mile journey through the Great State of Georgia.

Athletes from over 15 countries will compete for \$100,000 in cash and prizes. With a mix of road races, an individual time trial, and challenging terrain, the 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia will be an exciting event for both racers and spectators.

A great deal of attention will be on cycling this year, since many elite athletes vie to represent their countries in the Olympic Games in road, time trial or track disciplines of cycling in August. And, five-time Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong seeks his record sixth consecutive win on the Champs-Elysees in July. Part of the reason for a significant increase in media and spectator interest in the Dodge Tour de Georgia this year is because Armstrong will compete in the event with his United States Postal Service Pro Cycling team. It will be the only stage race Armstrong is expected to enter in North America this year, and the only event in the U.S. for him prior to his record attempt in France.

Officials with the Dodge Tour de Georgia project a \$20 to \$30 million boost to the Georgia economy. The value provided to its charitable beneficiary, the Georgia Cancer Coalition, is expected to surpass \$2.5 million, doubling the number from 2003. The 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia, the country's premier, professional cycling stage race, will visit 11 host cities in 6 days, from Tuesday, April 20 to Sunday, April 25.

As a world-class sporting event, the Dodge Tour de Georgia is defined in part by the 128 elite, professional cyclists who will compete in seven stage races, traversing 649 miles across Georgia in 6 days. As a vehicle to promote tourism and stimulate economic growth, the race is defined by the thousands of visitors and volunteers who plan to visit from across Georgia, the U.S. and abroad.

From just the impact of media, officials, teams, and support personnel, not including spectators, local communities will see an immediate impact from 3,000 room nights and over 7,000 meals.

I would like to commend the sponsors, organizers, and staff of the Dodge Tour de Georgia,

for bringing a world-class event of this magnitude to the people of the United States. I would also like to commend the Union Cycliste Internationale, for sanctioning this event.

I would like to recognize the host communities, Alpharetta, Athens, Carrollton, Columbus, Dalton, Dahlonega, Dawsonville, Hiwassee/Young Harris, Macon, Rome, and Thomaston; as well as their local organizing committees for their contribution to this worthy cause.

Cancer is a brutal killer that strikes without regard to age, race, sex, or station in life. I am grateful that there are organizations like the Georgia Cancer Coalition, which are dedicated to its eradication and there is support from organizations like Dodge; GE Energy; The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism; Georgia Power; Southern LINC; and the many others who have bonded together to organize and promote Georgia's Race to Cure Cancer.

This event brings the finest cyclists in the world to compete and raise money to fight a terrible killer so that all of the world may benefit. I am proud that this event will be held in my home state of Georgia and I commend all the athletes, organizers, volunteers and fans that make the Dodge Tour de Georgia a truly special event.

APRIL SCHOOLS OF THE MONTH
NEW YORK'S 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I congratulate the 63 elementary and middle schools from the 4th Congressional District which were recently designated as part of New York State's Most Improved Schools, and it is my honor to name them as my April Schools of the Month.

To qualify for Most Improved status, the schools have had to dramatically improve their English and Math scores. More than 50 percent of the students from the schools that made the list surpassed the English and Math standards and the number of students scoring at that level has increased by 20 points over the past 5 years, based on 4th and 8th grade test results.

The schools that made the list come from a mixture of areas from my Congressional district, proving that improving education isn't just a socioeconomic issue, but an area of concern that knows no boundaries. I am hopeful these schools will provide motivation to the rest of the schools in my district. It is common knowledge that education is the key to our children's future. We must ensure that not only the schools who made the list this year, but every one of our public schools has the funding to maintain their momentum and help all their students to meet the tougher Regents' standards.

The level of improvement by these schools is due to the hard work of the students, teachers, school staff and the parent body. Parents play a large role in the education of children by ensuring students complete their homework and improve their skills. However, I must specifically commend the teachers, who toil at a

tough job that doesn't receive enough appreciation. That is why I am going to begin honoring teachers each month by naming a Teacher of the Month. This honor will allow us to recognize the dedication and tireless effort put forth by these true professionals.

Once again, I congratulate all the honorees and look forward to honoring them, and other schools, in the future.

IN MEMORY OF EDWARD J. VOLANTE, LONGTIME CLIFTON HEIGHTS FIRE CHIEF, CAREER FIREFIGHTER WITH A LEGACY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, COMPASSION AND COURAGE

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness and tremendous gratitude to honor the life of my good friend, Edward J. Volante, a longtime Clifton Heights Fire Chief and career firefighter. As his family, friends and neighbors mourn the passing of Ed Volante, I want to take a few moments today to remember his work and the difference he made in the community he served so bravely and selflessly.

Chief Volante was a lifelong resident of Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania, where he served as fire chief for 26 years and a firefighter for 50 years. He embodied the most noble virtues of public service. The Chief served in almost every position in the fire company since joining the Clifton Heights Hose & Hook in 1954. Chief Volante will be remembered for his loyal dedication to improving his community's ability to respond to emergencies and ensure the safety of all residents.

Firefighting is a matter of life and death, and individuals like Chief Volante assume an enormous responsibility when they accept the job of running a fire department. They are responsible for the lives, homes, and livelihoods of thousands of citizens throughout their community. And on a day-to-day basis they become directly responsible for the health and welfare of all the men and women they supervise. Chief Volante discharged these enormous responsibilities with real distinction. During his 26 year tenure as chief, a good department became even better. Chief Volante took great pride in the fact that his fire company was the proving grounds for other companies. Chief Volante was respected for his commitment to public safety and his ability to get things done.

Recognizing how difficult it is these days to recruit volunteers, he had a sign posted outside the fire company, "Volunteers needed, apply here." He often said, "you can never have too many volunteers." The citizens of Clifton Heights should take comfort that their fire company will continue to evoke Chief Volante's spirit and legacy through their continued efforts to better their community. When the alarm sounds at all hours of the day and night it will serve as a call for more volunteers to the noble calling of the fire service.

Mr. Speaker, the 7th Congressional District has lost an exceptional public servant, and I have lost a good friend. I wish Chief Volante's wife of 44 years, Carol Ann and family, my heartfelt condolences and may they find com-

fort in knowing that the many people he impacted deeply value his dedication and generosity and the example of his life and work. Chief Edward J. Volante exemplified the spirit of service that has made this country great. This man was a genuine community leader. He not only did his job well, he loved it, and the community he served. We are safer because of his life and sacrifice. I am personally grateful to have known Chief Volante as a friend, and mourn his passing.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE HERNDON COMMUNITY BY TOM AND BETSY GREIN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Rep. TOM DAVIS and myself, it is our pleasure today to recognize the contributions to community journalism made by Tom and Betsy Grein through their ownership of The Observer newspapers in the Herndon community of Fairfax County, Virginia. After 13 years at the helm starting in June 1990—when they bought The Observer from the late Peggy Vetter, the newspaper's founder—the Greins last October sold the paper to new owners.

Tom and Betsy Grein formed a team dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of journalism with a focus on providing the community of Herndon with a vital source of information. Tom served as editor and publisher and Betsy was general manager and advertising director. During their tenure, The Observer grew with the community, increasing its circulation from 14,000 to more than 60,000, tripling its full-time staff, adding editions in Loudoun County and Reston, and publishing electronically on the World Wide Web.

Tom also wrote more than 700 "Our Town" columns, faithfully documenting his perspective of Herndon and the history and people of the community.

In addition to their tireless efforts as the owners of The Observer, they also found time to be active members of the Herndon community. Tom served on the Board of Directors of Herndon Community Television and the Herndon Rotary Club and Betsy was a member of the Board of Directors of the Herndon Dulles Chamber of Commerce and the Council for the Arts of Herndon.

We express appreciation to Tom and Betsy Grein on behalf of all the citizens of the greater Herndon community for their dedicated service to community journalism and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 89TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in remembering

the victims of the Armenian Genocide. April 24th will be the 89th anniversary of this human tragedy.

From 1915 to 1923, the world witnessed the first genocide of the 20th century. This was clearly one of the world's greatest tragedies—the deliberate and systematic Ottoman annihilation of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children. Furthermore, another 500,000 refugees fled and escaped to various points around the world—effectively eliminating the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

From these ashes arose hope and promise in 1991—and I was blessed to see it. I was one of the four international observers from the United States Congress to monitor Armenia's independence referendum. I went to the communities in the northern part of Armenia, and I watched in awe as 95 percent of the people over the age of 18 went out and voted.

The Armenian people had been denied freedom for so many years and, clearly, they were very excited about this new opportunity. Almost no one stayed home. They were all out in the streets going to the polling places. I watched in amazement as people stood in line for hours to get into these small polling places and vote.

Then, after they voted, the other interesting thing was that they did not go home. They had brought covered dishes with them, and all of these polling places had little banquets afterward to celebrate what had just happened.

What a great thrill it was to join them the next day in the streets of Yerevan when they were celebrating their great victory. Ninety-eight percent of the people who voted cast their ballots in favor of independence. It was a wonderful experience to be there with them when they danced and sang and shouted, "Ketse azat ankakh Hayastan"—long live free and independent Armenia! That should be the cry of freedom-loving people everywhere.

TRIBUTE TO PROVIDENCE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Providence Missionary Baptist Church on the occasion of the dedication of their new church facilities. Founded in Newark in 1921, this church has been serving and ministering to our community for 83 years, and has long been an institution within my district.

In March of 1921, six families gathered to establish the Rose Hill Baptist Church, calling Rev. B.W. Keith as their first pastor. Though they have moved to various locations around the city of Newark, they have continued to bless our community through their dedication to serving each other, as well as their neighbors, through compassionate ministry.

Providence Missionary Baptist Church continues to reach beyond their own parish to serve the citizens of Newark, establishing a feeding and clothing ministry called Feed My Sheep, Christian Education and Leadership training, an Annual Leadership Conference, and a preschool for the children in the community.

Under the leadership of their current Pastor, Rev. Vincent Grove, they continue to experience growth, adding new members to their