

Bush recession. Year after year after year they earn higher profits than any other industry in America for 20 straight years. Meanwhile, drug spending is fueling double-digit increases in health insurance premiums, drug spending is draining tax dollars out of the Federal Treasury hand over fist, drug spending is undermining the financial security of millions of seniors who have to choose between a full prescription drug dosage and their food or their utility bills.

Meanwhile, other countries are fighting back all over the world, but our government is not. Instead, at the behest of the drug industry, the Bush administration is trying to undermine price negotiations in Australia and block lower price prescriptions from even reaching our country.

Catering to a major campaign contributor like the drug industry is nothing new to this administration, but is it not getting a little ridiculous. If trade agreements are about creating open markets for cheaper goods and better market access, why are we trying to do something the opposite of that? Why are we trying to raise the price of prescription drugs across the world? The answer is easy: the pharmaceutical industry wants to make more money and the Bush administration and Republican leadership want their campaign help.

Enough is enough. A vote for the Australia Free Trade Agreement is a vote against U.S. consumers. It is as simple as that.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4759, UNITED STATES-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-602) on the resolution (H. Res. 712) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4759) to implement the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4634

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the name of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) as a cosponsor of H.R. 4634.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. GUTKNECHT 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 gen-

tleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

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

There was no objection.

TELL AMERICA THE TRUTH

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, this week had barely begun before three more U.S. soldiers died in Iraq. The U.S. casualties keep mounting and that is a tragedy, but this administration remains silent on a coming travesty in Iraq.

The President's appointed interim Iraqi government is preparing to offer amnesty to Iraqi insurgents, amnesty to the very people who are killing and wounding U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Our soldiers remain on patrol in the most dangerous place on Earth; and the snipers, bombers, and militants are about to be offered amnesty. What in the world is going on in this administration? Is this what the administration calls the road to peace? What is the President going to tell the families of every U.S. soldier killed or wounded in combat? What is the President going to tell the U.S. people?

The interim Iraqi government was created by the U.S. administration, make no mistake about that, so no one should think that this policy was not put in place without the express approval of the White House.

Now, Iraq says it is in their national interest to offer amnesty to the very insurgents U.S. soldiers have been battling day by day. This administration had no reason to start a war with Iraq. This administration had no plan to prosecute the war with Iraq, and now this administration demonstrates it has no plan to end the war in Iraq. What do we say to the dead? What do we say to the families of those who died? What do we say to the soldiers injured by roadside bombs and mortar attacks and snipers?

Is this the President's exit strategy in Iraq? 160,000 soldiers remain in harm's way in a country that is about to offer amnesty to the people who are attacking them. If the interim Iraq government can offer amnesty, why can the U.S. not offer every U.S. soldier the option to leave? If Iraq's insurgents are offered freedom, why are U.S. soldiers not offered the freedom to choose whether they stay?

Why will the people shooting at U.S. soldiers get special treatment while our soldiers get stop loss orders, forcing thousands of them to remain in harm's way. What in the world is going on in Iraq? We have to be brave enough to accept our people and embrace all Iraqis. That is a direct quote from Iraq's interim President, Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawar.

So much for the U.S. being seen as a great liberator. Even the interim government sees the U.S. as an occupier. So in their view it is okay to cut a deal with the insurgents. It is a statement about the instability of the entire country and the inability of the government to do anything about it. It is the most glaring statement yet that the administration was completely wrong in its need to go to war and unequivocally wrong with the consequences of post-war Iraq.

There have been more U.S. casualties since the President's declaration of "mission accomplished" than during all the major combat operations. Now the world has become even more dangerous and no amount of denial will alter the images of the Iraq prison.

Why talk about this shame again? Because it is entirely possible that this administration continues to ignore the most fundamental international protection for every prisoner. Abu Ghraib showed the world that the Geneva Convention was something the administration left out of the Iraq war plan. After those revelations, the administration made sweeping statements about their support of the Geneva Convention. Yet just today, the International Red Cross said it fears this administration is secretly holding more prisoners around the world.

Quoting a Red Cross spokesperson, "Some of these people who have been reported to be arrested never showed up in any of the places of detention run by the U.S. where we visit."

How bad does it get before the administration follows international law? Who does the administration think benefits from its failures to protect prisoners and follow international law? The International Red Cross tried to work behind the scenes before the Abu Ghraib scandal. The administration ignored them. The Red Cross tried to act as a catalyst for positive change in the wake of the scandals. Today's news makes clear the administration still believes it can flaunt international law. There can be no peace without justice, Mr. President, not in Iraq or anywhere else.

Justice begins by treating prisoners we capture in the same way, with the same rights that we would expect to be extended to an American. Justice delayed is justice denied. Act now before another day goes by. Give the International Red Cross unrestricted access to every secret U.S. location where prisoners are being held. Prove once and for all that America stands for human rights and justice. Let the Red Cross see and the world know if America is true to its words. Let the Red

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.