

therefore, we must, within the House and the Senate, do our part to protect the constitutional rights of the American people, and that includes those who are spiritual leaders of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families, and I ask God to please bless America.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to replace the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

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

There was no objection.

SHORTCOMINGS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein was a murderous despot in Iraq, and the world is better off without him. There is no disputing that fact. However, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report, all 511 pages, including the 15 percent that was redacted, raises very serious questions about the nature of the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to the United States that led to the first-ever preemptive war in the history of our country. Even the President says there were "some shortcomings." Well, let us look at a few of the shortcomings.

The aluminum tubes that we were told was slam dunk evidence by Mr. Tenet of the CIA that they were going to separate uranium and enrich it misrepresented key evidence. It had nothing to do with uranium separation.

Uranium from Niger, obvious sign; a key document was forged, rather amateur forgery, actually.

The revised weapons program; the claim is not supported by the intelligence.

The mobile labs; withheld important information about the sources, lack of reliability.

This is the famous Curveball, showed up drunk at his one meeting with a U.S. intelligence representative and did not seem very credible. One upstanding individual over at the CIA wanted to raise concerns and go on record about how the fact he was not a good source, but the deputy chief of the agency's Iraqi task force said we can

hash this out in a quick meeting. He rejected the worries as irrelevant.

□ 1930

Here is his quote: "Let's keep in mind the fact that this war is going to happen regardless of what Curveball said or didn't said and that the powers that be probably aren't terribly interested in whether Curveball knows what he's talking about," the CIA official replied in an e-mail message obtained by the committee. Basically, they did not want to know that this was phony information.

Smallpox designer germs. Not supported by the intelligence, according to the CIA.

The drones. I saw pictures of the drones. They were these little patched-together things, and George Bush was talking about what a tremendous threat they were. Did not look like they could fly at all, and they certainly could not fly any distance. The head of intelligence for the Air Force, they know a little about planes, said, in fact, there was no credible threat connected to the drones.

The list goes on and on and on. And as the President says, there were some shortcomings. There were more than some shortcomings; there was an extraordinary distortion of very, very poor intelligence and minimal evidence that there was any threat posed by Saddam Hussein. In fact, the conclusion of this Republican Senate-led Select Committee on Intelligence is that the military of Saddam Hussein was on a horrible downward spiral, was incredibly degraded, had never recovered from the Gulf War, that the sanctions in the containment were working, and that he did not pose any credible threat to the United States nor even to Iran or some of his other neighbors.

But the President would still say, as he did seven times in 32 minutes yesterday, just to make sure people did not miss the message behind him, which was to show that American people are safer. Well, there is a real question about that since they put us on a higher terror alert. They are talking about postponing the elections. Postponing the constitutionally mandated elections, I do not know how they do that, but I guess it is part of his executive powers we do not know about, because of the threat posed by Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, who have been over there regrouping and freely operating for the 2 years the Bush administration turned all our intelligence assets, the world's attentions, our military assets to Iraq.

And they say the world is safer? The world is not safer. In fact, he allowed those people to regroup and to raise a threat that is so grave that his Homeland Security Secretary is asking how we might be able to postpone the elections if we know 3 or 4 days before that George Bush is behind in the polls. No, no, I mean do we know there is a credible threat or there was a terrorist attack?

Now, there was one piece of evidence that was good. There is a guy named Zakawi; and he is a really, really bad guy. And Colin Powell pointed to where he was on the map. Guess where that was? That was in a little corner of Iraq, behind the Kurdish territory, which was overflowed by the United States on a daily basis. Saddam Hussein could not get at that guy if he wanted to. But we could have, three times.

Three times the Pentagon asked to take out Zakawi, who is now responsible for killing maybe tens of hundreds of U.S. troops and Iraqis in a terrorist campaign, and three times the Bush administration said, no, you cannot take him out. Because if you take him out, it might disturb our recruiting for the war against Iraq that does not pose a threat to the United States of America. What incredibly misplaced priorities these people have.

If it is a war on terrorism, then go after the terrorists: Osama bin, al Qaeda, Zakawi. But, no, they distracted us into this war with Iraq in some bizarre neoconservative vision of the world, and many Americans have died because of their mistakes, and I fear that more might because he has allowed the terrorists to regroup.

U.N. OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAM

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

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting how night after night during this period of the evening we call Special Orders that my friends on the other side of the aisle come down and talk about allegations of scandals, of things like contracts with companies trying to help rebuild Iraq, outcries over misleading our Nation to war, charges of coverups and lack of cooperation; and so I would like to just address what the previous speaker talked about, which is this allegation that there is an attempt to delay the elections.

All the news reports I have seen in the last 24 hours is that there was never any request nor any really evidence of anybody trying to delay elections by any means at all. But sometimes we just do not let the facts get in the way of our opinions, and so we ignore those.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask my colleagues to imagine that there is a scenario like the following: imagine if the press had reported an alleged scandal that entailed \$10 billion of illegal payments, and in that same article it was revealed that the head of the program that was the subject of those allegations was implicated and was suspected of directly participating in those illegal payments.

And then after this head of this program was implicated, he went back to the organization that he was running, and he sent out letters to all of the

companies that had contracts with this organization and said, now, remember, we have a contract that says you are not supposed to discuss any of our dealings with any third parties, and we will enforce that provision of our contract, and we expect you not to cooperate with anyone asking any questions. Now, that same contract said that we could waive this; but we are not inclined to do that, which means we really are not inclined to cooperate at all.

Also imagine if this same organization had done 55 internal audits and was now unwilling to share any of them with its stakeholders, the people that had invested in this organization, the people that were served by this organization. The people that had a stake in this organization were not allowed to see any of these internal audits because none of them were allowed to become public.

Now, if this had actually happened, I think there would be a great outcry, especially from my friends on the other side of the aisle. But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that such a scandal truly exists, so we do not have to imagine a thing.

The Iraqi Free Press. Let me say that again. The Iraqi Free Press, which did not exist 18 months ago because there was no such thing as the Iraqi Free Press, broke a story about the U.N. Oil-for-Food scandal, which could potentially turn out to be the largest scandal in history. In that report they said there was a gentleman named Sevan, and possibly Benon Sevan, who ran the Oil-for-Food program, who may have gotten some of these illegal payments. And this same Mr. Sevan wrote to all of the U.N. contractors saying, now, remember, we have this clause that says you cannot discuss the details of our relationship with any third parties.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would think that the U.N. would want to cooperate with an investigation; and if they truly wanted to cooperate, they would waive the provision that is in the contract and say, go ahead and cooperate with anyone who is investigating appropriately this matter, and do not worry about that provision because we really want to understand the truth in this matter.

Mr. Sevan will not allow the member states of the U.N. to see those 55 audits to understand exactly what was happening internally in the U.N., and specifically with the Oil-for-Food program.

Mr. Speaker, there is a ray of hope in this story. And the ray of hope is that former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker has recently been appointed to investigate this matter. He is a highly respected man and I am sure will do a very good job.

The most important thing we do is not engage in a bunch of rhetoric and outcry and charges and allegations. The most important thing we accomplish here is to actually get to the root of the problem and understand the facts and understand exactly what hap-

pened here and understand whether the allegations are true: that \$10 billion has somehow disappeared, money which was specifically supposed to go to help feed and provide for the health care of the Iraqi people because they are the ones that will ultimately suffer as a result of this scandal. They were supposed to be provided for with the oil riches of their nation in food and oil, and it appears that others used those riches for their own self-gain.

So I encourage all the Members of this body to express not outcry but sincere concern about this issue and use all the resources that we have at our disposal to make sure the U.N. cooperates in the Oil-for-Food scandal investigation and provides Chairman Volcker with all of the information and all of the resources that he needs so that we can thoroughly and properly investigate this matter.

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

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

DO NOT POSTPONE THE NOVEMBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, almost 4 years ago, President Bush came to the office of the Presidency having lost the popular vote in this country by over 500,000 votes, having endured a disputed election in Florida, where there were multiple charges and accusations of fraud and people being denied the right to vote. We had the involvement of the Supreme Court for the first time, I believe, in our Nation's history in making a decision basically to stop the counting of votes in Florida. And so the President came to office under these very unusual circumstances.

I think all of us, all of the country recognized that there was a need for healing in our country, and we hoped that President Bush would do what he promised to do during his campaign: that he would be a uniter, not a divider; that he would govern as a compassionate conservative. But the fact is that President Bush has governed from the far right of his party, and he has perhaps been the most divisive President in recent history.

We all know also that on September 11, 2001, our country was attacked and all Americans pulled together at that time. It was a time when the President had a unique opportunity to mobilize the world in the fight against terrorism. But rather than do that, he chose to go his own way, to use intelligence data that was inaccurate, I believe exaggerated and manipulated, in

order to convince the American people that there was a threat from Iraq, when we now know that the real threat continues to come from al Qaeda and the terrorist network headed by Osama bin Laden, who I would remind all of us is free tonight to plot the next attack upon our Nation.

In the last few hours, something has happened that alarms me, and I think will alarm the American people as they find out about it. Earlier this week, the U.S. Elections Assistant Commissioner, who is a Bush appointee, asked the Homeland Security Secretary, Mr. Tom Ridge, to consider seeking the authority to postpone a Federal election. As a result, the Department of Homeland Security has asked the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel to analyze the steps that would be needed to postpone the November Presidential election.

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage. The postponement of a Presidential election would present the greatest threat to date to our democratic process. It would be a capitulation to the terrorists, inviting them to disrupt the selection of our highest leader, and it would be unprecedented for a Presidential election.

Not even the Civil War stopped the 1864 Presidential election from taking place. I quote from Abraham Lincoln, November 10, 1864: President Lincoln said, "We cannot have free government without elections; and if the rebellion could force us to forego or postpone a national election, it might already fairly claim to have conquered or ruined us."

In early 1864, President Abraham Lincoln feared that he may lose the Presidency because of widespread criticism of his handling of the Civil War. No President had won a second term since Andrew Jackson, more than 30 years prior, and the Union had recently suffered a string of military disappointments.

□ 1945

Under those conditions, many of Lincoln's closest advisers urged him to postpone the election so that he could focus on the war effort, but Abraham Lincoln never even considered that possibility, nor should we.

The fight against terrorism, like the Civil War, will affect more than a generation of Americans. Let us make sure that in this long fight against terrorism we do not lose what we are fighting for in the first place. I do not know that this would happen, but I think the American people need to be paying attention. Would it be possible that shortly before the elections the residing party in power determined that things were not going so well, would there be a temptation under those circumstances to find some reason to justify postponing the election? We should never even consider such a possibility. I call upon the President to reject this suggestion, and I call upon this Congress to stand together as Republicans and Democrats to say we are