

having our Presidential election on November 2, regardless of what the terrorists may seek to do.

OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAM

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Chairman, there have been charges over the last number of months, even the last year or two, of various kickbacks and mismanagement of different businesses and different kinds of things that are going on that I have heard from the Democrat Party, but it is interesting that there has been a stony silence when it comes to the biggest scam which is now emerging, the biggest scam in many, many years. It involves not only kickbacks and bribery but it involves even murdering various individuals. I am talking about the new evidence that is emerging on the Oil-for-Food program.

As the Members are perhaps aware, the Oil-for-Food program was a very large program administered by the United Nations. Its purpose was to try to provide humanitarian aid for the Iraqi people and so Saddam was allowed to sell some oil and the oil was supposed to be translated into food which was supposed to get back to his people. What is now emerging and has been emerging for some time is that the United Nations staff that have been administering this program is guilty of gross incompetence, mismanagement and probably complicit with the Iraqi regime in perpetuating the biggest scandal in United Nations history.

It was the largest U.N.-administered program anywhere in the world, that collected a 2.2 percent commission on every barrel of oil sold, and those dollars were put into the Banque Nationale de Paris. According to a February, 2004, article in the New York Times, it says that that money was "an open bazaar of payoffs, favoritism and kickbacks."

Why have we not heard more complaint about this? Why have we not heard complaint that the U.N. is trying to bottle up this information and not allow anybody to check into where this money was going? Particularly why is it that the Democrat Party would want us to turn Iraq over to the United Nations, the very people that are in the middle of perpetuating this scam? I do not understand that.

The emerging evidence suggests that corrupt politicians and businesses throughout the world benefited from this Oil-for-Food program and they kept the Iraqi dictator in power. Those who benefited from the corruption have been listed, some of them prominent United Nations officials, including the son of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The list includes no fewer than 46 Russians and 11 French names. The close connection between French and Russian politicians and the Iraqi dictator suggests at least one reason why these

governments worked so hard to undermine American efforts to enforce the U.N. resolutions and ultimately remove Saddam from power. In fact, what we find is that documents that were discovered in the wreckage of the Iraqi foreign ministry reveal that the French were sharing the contents of confidential meetings and diplomatic traffic from Washington. Details of talks between French President Chirac and President Bush were also reportedly passed on to the Iraqi foreign ministry by French diplomats in Baghdad.

Yet I cannot understand, why would the Democrats criticize us for not obtaining support from the Russians and the French? The Russians and the French were skimming billions of dollars in a huge scam, and there was absolutely no financial reason for them to want to enforce the United Nations sanctions or to join America in messing up their cozy little deal.

I believe the United States should push for an exhaustive and independent investigation of the Oil-for-Food Program. I think Congress should consider linking our continued funding of the United Nations to long overdue reform and the prosecution of the U.N. officials who were taking part in this program.

In January of 2004 in the State of the Union address, President Bush asserted that America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our people. I am glad that he did not need a permission slip, because if we were waiting for the United Nations and for France and for Russia, we would still be waiting. The participation by undermining U.S. efforts in the war on terror is dramatic. Those who, like JOHN KERRY, would seek a permission slip from the U.N. need first to answer the question why the American people should trust their security to an institution whose largest humanitarian program benefited anti-American businesses and political elites, rather than the Iraqi people, a U.N. run by leaders who are part of the biggest scandal in United Nations history.

This needs to be discussed, and we need some answers before we continue to put American dollars into funding a United Nations who was working completely against the interests of the Iraqi people and the interests of freedom around the world.

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

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

HONORING THE NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as national cochair to honor the outstanding work of the National Youth Sports Program in my home State of Wisconsin and the 200 programs throughout the Nation and to recognize the essential role NYSP plays in children's lives during those crucial weeks during the summertime.

For 35 years, NYSP has brought organized athletics and academic courses in math and science into the summer routines of low-income children aged 10 to 16. For 5 weeks, children learn leadership skills and work to develop strong moral character through sports. Furthermore, NYSP provides students with education in substance abuse prevention, career instruction and perhaps their first comprehensive physical. In addition, students receive a hot, well-balanced USDA-approved meal each day.

As a former college quarterback and a father of two little boys, I know the opportunity that sports can have on positively impacting the lives of our children. Thanks to NYSP, a soccer field, a basketball court, a swimming pool turns into classrooms. The lessons in these innovative classrooms are civility, teamwork and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty as policymakers to preserve these vital opportunities. It is in the interest of our children and our country to do so.

For proof of the importance of the National Youth Sports Program, I invite the Members to look at two participating institutions that I had the opportunity to visit recently from my home district in western Wisconsin.

At the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, over 300 children participate in NYSP each summer. In addition to excellent athletic and academic instruction from a dedicated staff, these children have participated in a ropes course to foster higher self-esteem, have been treated by local physicians and dentists free of charge, participated in the DARE and GREAT programs with local police officers, and have painted over graffiti found on public property. The NYSP at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is enriching the lives of low-income children while simultaneously enriching the community as a whole. I would like to take this opportunity to thank program director Mary Beth Vahala and the many community volunteers, including Dr. Richard Foss and Dr. Holly Grimslid for their integral role in the success of NYSP at La Crosse.

The NYSP at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, directed by Dr. Bill Harms and Mr. Tom Pratt, has been consistently ranked as one of the top summer programs in the entire Nation. Every summer, over 500 children learn to live the NYSP creed, "to walk tall, talk tall and stand tall." In addition to a wonderful selection of standard athletics at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, students spend time each day studying math and science in an effort to teach the importance of these

subjects at a young age. Under the excellent tutelage of coordinators Ms. Sunshine McFaul and Mr. Jayson Leslie, students discover the value of math and science in their lives. I also want to thank and commend NYSP's national director Dr. Gale Wiedow for his terrific leadership of these 200 programs throughout our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, these two fine programs in my home district in western Wisconsin are indicative of the quality of NYSP as a whole; and I am thankful for the dedicated staff and volunteers that make it happen. Unfortunately, the President proposed to eliminate NYSP program funding in the next fiscal year's budget. Fortunately, however, NYSP has enjoyed wide bipartisan support in Congress.

I also want to thank my good friend and colleague from Buffalo, New York (Mr. QUINN) for cochairing the National Youth Sports Program with me in recent years. He has been a terrific advocate of youth generally and of NYSP specifically. I appreciate his hard work in going to bat for this program. He will be sorely missed in this Chamber, and we all wish him a happy retirement.

Tonight I stand with thousands of children to thank the Committee on Appropriations for fully funding NYSP, and I urge my colleagues to remember the value of athletics and academics in our children's lives and the important role NYSP plays in delivering both during the summer months.

Mr. Speaker, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi, once famously said, "Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit." The National Youth Sports Program teaches children not to quit, and it is our responsibility not to quit on them.

OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAM

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. First, just a couple of minor observations on the debate so far tonight. We heard earlier the gentleman from Oregon mention that the Pentagon on three separate occasions believed that they could strike and eliminate a terrorist who was a threat to the United States. I would just caution the gentleman to be very careful lest he be considered as advocating a preemptive unilateral act of war against a resident alien in his sovereign host country.

Also, on the previous mentioning of plans, whether real or not, that explored potentially delaying the election, I, too, would just like to say that I would oppose any plan to delay an American election. But I also think that it is important to remember that in the 1864 election Abraham Lincoln did not spend a lot of time personally campaigning to win the votes of southern voters, as my understanding is that those people chose not to participate in

that election. The distinction which is critical would be, then, that while the southern States in rebellion chose not to participate in the Presidential election, there may be many Americans who, through an act of terror, may be precluded against their will from participating in an American election.

So if we are done with the rhetorical flourishes of partisanship, perhaps there would be some who would like to explore a responsible policy approach and instead think of if an urban center, which are primarily the targets of the terrorists, would be attacked, we do not suspend the date of the election but perhaps the election could be extended until those people could be given their American constitutional right to vote in that election. I say that as a Republican knowing full well that my party does not do well in large urban areas, but I say that as an American respecting the rights of my fellow citizens to be able to participate in the choosing of their national leadership.

On to the point that I wish to talk about. Mr. Speaker, in addition to playing host to the United Nations, United States taxpayers provide 22 percent of the United Nations' core funding. It is not, therefore, inhospitable nor unwarranted for U.S. taxpayers to demand a full and fair accounting of the U.N.'s \$111 billion Oil-for-Food Program, especially when, as revealed in a May 6 article by Hudson Institute Fellow Claudia Rosett, the U.S. Treasury Department has designated one of the Oil-for-Food contractors as a front group for senior officials of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Initial reports estimate over \$10 billion has been stolen, misplaced and/or skimmed from this program that was designed to help the Iraqi people. Combined with the aforementioned front group/contractor, we may well have witnessed a U.N.-administered relief program result in food being torn from the mouths of victimized Iraqis and placed in the pockets of Saddam's executioners and their contemptible, utterly corrupt international co-conspirators.

We in the world demand and deserve answers, Mr. Speaker, and yet we have been met by a stone wall of resistance and a wealth of stealth on the part of the United Nations. Excuses abound for the cover-up, the two most noticeable being that it is an institutional response. I am sure that they culled that from the old records of Tammany Hall. They also say that they will not release any of the 55 internal audits because of the, quote, sensitivity of member states. I think that the sensitivities of member states like the United States and the United States Congress which have repeatedly asked for these documents should be accorded as much as the purported sensitivity of states who may have something to hide.

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If they do in fact have nothing to hide, if the intimidating letters to con-

tractors and the untendered records to Congress may be belied, then to save its last lingering endangered chard of integrity, General Secretary Kofi Annan, with the stroke of a pen, can release all the requisite oil for food documents and shed transparency and truth upon this abominable fraud. And while the U.S. taxpayers might not hold our breath until he complies, we U.S. taxpayers must withhold our funding from the United Nations until he does.

SUPPORT AMERICA'S TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in families there are always very special occasions. Before I enter into my special order this evening, I wish to announce that in our family we have had a wonderful addition this past Saturday afternoon, July 10. Abigail Anding Skelton was born over here in Maryland. She is absolutely a gorgeous young lady, and we are very happy for her, her wonderful parents, her cousins and aunts and uncles, as well as grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, as Americans review the facts and decide whether it was prudent and necessary for the President to send American troops to invade Iraq, let me remind my colleagues and the citizens across our country that it is possible to respectfully disagree with the President and still strongly support our troops.

I believe that all House Democrats support our men and women in uniform and are committed to ensuring that they have the tools they need to succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan, wherever they may be serving in the defense of our country.

Over 466,000 service members are currently deployed to 120 countries around the world, and nearly half of those are serving and doing so in dangerous and often deadly conditions in the Middle East. While the majority of the troops deployed are on active duty, nearly 30 percent are citizen-soldiers from the National Guard, as well as the Reserve, who volunteered to serve our Nation. These men and women have volunteered to leave behind their families, their loved ones, jobs and communities to defend the freedoms that we hold so dear.

Over 150,000 Reservists and National Guardsmen are currently deployed, which is nearly 18 percent of the total Reserve force. Since September 11, over 215,600 Reservists and Guardsmen have served their Nation both at home and abroad. Not since the first Persian Gulf War have so many served under such arduous conditions for so long.

While 18 percent may not seem very high, let me put it in a bit different perspective. Over 40 percent of the