

the war in Iraq was started by the government leaders we have, but not the government leaders we want.

Let us take a look at the folks who are running things at the White House. Who is weighing in on this war every single day? First, we have got Scooter Libby, the Vice President's chief of staff. Scooter Libby was in charge of coordinating the intelligence and communications strategy for the war in Iraq until last week. Last week, Libby was indicted by a Federal prosecutor for his role in outing undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame.

Libby's precise role in this scandal is not yet clear, but it is suspected that he shopped Ms. Plame's identity to multiple reporters in an effort to discredit her husband, Ambassador Joe Wilson, who opposed the invasion of Iraq and cited proof that the administration's claims of yellow cake in Niger were actually false.

This political assassination reveals the cold, calculated tactics used by the Bush administration in the buildup to the war. Obviously, the administration was so righteous in their cause that they would do anything to stop those who opposed them, including identifying an undercover CIA agent. Now a Federal investigation is getting to the heart of those callous prewar tactics. Unfortunately, if Scooter Libby is the sole administration official to be punished for the governmental failures that led to the war in Iraq, then he will become a scapegoat of historic proportions.

Libby's boss, Vice President CHENEY, was no less involved in the planning that led to the war. According to reports, Mr. CHENEY badgered and bullied low-level CIA analysts into misinterpreting evidence regarding Saddam's supposed nuclear weapons program. Also, we cannot overlook that Vice President CHENEY was the CEO of Halliburton, the company that has benefited from billions and billions of dollars of contracts in Iraq. How many bids did Halliburton have to place to get these massive construction contracts? Surprisingly, not a single one.

That brings us to former CIA Director George Tenet. As the CIA chief in the months leading up to the war in Iraq, George Tenet personally vetted much of the intelligence that was cited as evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction "program." Today, we are certain that evidence was completely false. Saddam Hussein did not possess weapons of mass destruction, nor did he have a program that could create weapons of mass destruction.

So what did George Tenet receive for presiding over one of the monumental intelligence failures in modern history? Why, the Presidential Medal of Honor, of course.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that many of the administration have benefited personally and professionally from the war in Iraq, while the rank and file, our soldiers, have suffered a dispropor-

tionate share of the burden. You go to war with the Army you have? Well, I have been to Iraq and I have got news for the American people: the Army we have is pretty darn impressive. We ought to be proud of their commitment to America's security, and we ought to be appalled that their civilian superiors have not demonstrated an equal commitment to them. It is our country's highest leaders that we ought to be worried about.

The indictment of those involved in the prewar intelligence would be a start. After more than 2 years of war, over \$200 billion spent, continued death and continued suffering, it is time to end this awful game of lies. It is time to end this corruption. Let us support our troops. Let us bring them home to their families where they belong.

BIG LIES AND LITTLE LIES

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, Scooter Libby has been indicted for lying. Many suspect Libby, and perhaps others, deliberately outed Joe Wilson's wife as a covert agent. This was done to punish and discredit Wilson for bringing attention to the false information regarding Iraq's supposed efforts to build a nuclear weapon, information made public in President Bush's State of the Union message in January, 2003. Special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald was chosen to determine if this revelation regarding Valerie Plame, Wilson's wife, violated the Intelligence Identification Protection Act. The actual indictment of Libby did not claim such a violation occurred. Instead, he has been charged with lying and participating in a cover-up during the 2-year investigation. I believe this is a serious matter that should not be ignored.

□ 1930

But it is not an Earth-shattering event. This case, like almost everything in Washington, has been driven by politics, not truth, justice or the Constitution. It is about seeking political power, pure and simple, not unlike the impeachment process during the last administration.

There are much more serious charges of lying and cover-ups that deserve congressional attention. The country now knows the decision to go to war was based on information that was not factual. Congress and the people of this country were misled. Because of this, more than 2,000 U.S. troops and many innocent people have died. Tens of thousands have been severely wounded, their lives forever changed, if not totally ruined.

The lies Scooter Libby may or may not have told deserve a thorough investigation, but in the scheme of things, the indictment about questions regard-

ing the release of Valerie Plame's name, a political dirty trick, is minor compared to the disinformation about weapons of mass destruction and other events that propelled us into an unnecessary war. It costs, in life, suffering and money, have proven to be prohibitive. The Libby indictment, unless it opens the door to more profound questions concerning why we went to war, may serve only as a distraction from much more serious events and lies.

The decision to go to war is profound. It behooves Congress to ask more questions and investigate exactly how the President, Congress and the people were misled into believing that invading Iraq was necessary for our national security.

Why do we still not know who forged the documents claiming Saddam Hussein was about to buy uranium from Niger? Was this information concocted by those who were overly eager to go to war? Why was CIA reluctance regarding this assessment ignored, allowing it to be presented by the President as a clincher for our need to go to war? Other reasons used to justify the war deserve equal attention since the results have been so painful for our country.

If lies were told to justify the invasion of Iraq, the American people deserve to know the truth. Congress has a responsibility to seek this truth and change our policies accordingly. The sooner this is done, the better.

THE MYRIAD OBSTACLES OF DEALING WITH FEMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this month, most Americans will celebrate Thanksgiving, and we always look forward to being with our families. On our minds this year, however, are the thousands and thousands of Americans who have been uprooted as a result of the hurricanes in the Gulf region who really need a Thanksgiving; and, as we celebrate, we ought to remember them. We ought to ask ourselves how we can really have a Plymouth Rock weekend and find a way to extend a helping hand to our fellow citizens in the South.

Today, the newspaper USA Today had a lead story talking about the lack of help that these Americans are receiving from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and thousands and thousands scattered across over 18,700 zip codes in all 50 States, people whose footing will not be firm come Thanksgiving this November.

It talks about how the lack of FEMA support has hindered the local groups, the church groups, the not-for-profits, that are trying to help these Americans, our fellow citizens, reposition. They talk about how relief groups have been stymied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's failure to

provide basic information about the evacuees.

I would like to place on the record this evening efforts our office has been making to try to connect housing from the North in communities that we represent, whether that housing is inspected mobile homes, manufactured homes and trailers, to move those units south, to move that excess supply south to the Gulf to people who need the help.

Do you know FEMA does not even have a central Web site yet where we can offer these available units? I represent the longest coastal district in Ohio. We have mobile home courts, manufactured housing, fishing trailers, we have all kinds of units that are sitting empty now that are on the list for sale. They could be easily inspected by Ohio inspectors or taken down to Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, places where people have been displaced. FEMA cannot even create a central records system.

The article this morning talks about the National Low Income Housing Coalition and all the trouble they are having getting basic information about who needs help, who needs shelter as we approach Thanksgiving, how many people have been displaced, where are they living. How is it possible this many months after these tragedies we do not have this information?

FEMA spokeswoman Nicol Andrews said she could not explain why at least three relief groups did not get the data. And, by the way, even our government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are waiting to receive this basic information.

Douglas Culkin of the National Apartment Association, one of the most recognized organizations in our country, says that his association, anxious to be helpful, cannot get information on where evacuees are staying; and at an October 17 meeting here in Washington, Mr. Culkin said he was told someone would get him the information. Guess what? He still does not have it. He says it is unconscionable, and I agree.

What could be so hard about linking supply from the North, for example, with people who need help in the South? Why do I have to come down here to the floor of the Congress and let the country know that, again, FEMA just cannot seem to get its act together?

I had to call the office of the new director of FEMA, R. David Paulison, who did return my phone call, and I appreciate it very much, simply to let him know that I wanted somebody in that agency who knew something about housing, or I said, lacking that, get us somebody from the Department of Defense who is used to putting up field housing. Let's get an interagency transfer and someone who can work with us to move supply, excess supply from the North to those who need supply in the South. Even if it is tem-

porary, it is better than nothing as we approach Thanksgiving season. Why should this be so hard?

All you have to do is talk to the people who run the manufactured housing parks, the mobile home parks, the trailer parks. Let us get those units inspected. We can even put them on trains.

I represent a major rail center. We can get them down into Memphis and take them right into Gulfport, Mississippi. What is the problem? Why cannot FEMA help us?

Plenty of stories have been written about Mississippi. The Manufactured Home Association down there says they have sent notices to FEMA offering housing, never receiving a reply. That is from people inside of Mississippi. Then they found out that Mississippi's government, the government of Mississippi, made purchases from outside Mississippi rather than inside Mississippi.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will place this article in the RECORD this evening; and, please, we are begging FEMA, let all Americans have a blessed Thanksgiving this year.

[From USA Today, Nov. 1, 2005]

LACK OF FEMA DATA SLOWS RELIEF

(By Mimi Hall)

Relief groups trying to help Hurricane Katrina evacuees find new homes and reunite with families say they have been stymied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's failure to provide information about evacuees.

"It's scandalous," said Sheila Crowley of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Congress should have hearings about the lack of information that's available."

Crowley said her organization has been trying for weeks to get information that FEMA collected on how many people were displaced from low-income housing and where they are living. She said the group needs the information to "understand the various situations that evacuees find themselves in."

FEMA spokeswoman Nicol Andrews said she couldn't explain why at least three relief groups didn't get the data. She said FEMA is "happy to share" the information except with groups trying to profit from the evacuees.

Most groups that have complained are nonprofits. Others that requested but didn't immediately receive the data were the government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The complaints have sparked the latest wave of discontent against the beleaguered disaster-relief agency. Since Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29, FEMA has been widely assailed for its response.

PICO National Network, a coalition of 1,000 churches, including 100 in New Orleans, also has been trying to collect information about evacuees' whereabouts to help pastors find parishioners and help them contact relatives and friends.

"It's critical that we rebuild all these social networks," PICO's Gordon Whitman said.

Many of the groups are seeking updates to data that FEMA had given to USA TODAY. On Sept. 29, the newspaper published a map showing that tens of thousands of evacuees were scattered across 18,700 ZIP codes in all 50 states.

Douglas Culkin of the National Apartment Association said he wants the information so his association can determine how much apartment stock is available in towns and cities where evacuees are staying. At an Oct. 17 meeting with FEMA officials in Washington, D.C., Culkin said he was told someone would get him the information.

He still doesn't have it. "It's unconscionable," Culkin said.

AVIAN FLU AND THIMEROSAL

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States today made a speech before our health agencies that I think was very timely and very important. It dealt with the possible outbreak of the bird flu, better known as the avian flu, and he talked about steps that needed to be taken to speed up the process to create more vaccines to protect the American public against a pandemic that could kill tens of thousands, if not millions, of Americans. I think if is very laudable that he did that.

One of the things he talked about was tort reform to protect the pharmaceutical industry against liability suits, because he said there is only one vaccine manufacturer in the United States, and that is because the vaccine manufacturers have been afraid to produce vaccines because they might be sued on a class action basis. There might be thousands of people suing them because of damage that has been done to them.

So if I were talking to the President tonight, I would say, first of all, Mr. President, I think what you said was very good and what you proposed is very good. There are a couple of things that ought to be added to the mix though, Mr. President, that I think are very important.

First of all, we had hearings for about 4 years on mercury in vaccines. It used to be one in 10,000 children were autistic. Now it is one in 166. We had scientists from all over the world and doctors from all over the United States come in and testify that one of the leading causes of neurological problems in children and adults who are suffering from things like Alzheimer's is they have been damaged by the mercury that is used as a preservative in vaccines. It is called Thimerosal.

We need to get mercury out of all vaccines. Until that happens, I think it is going to be very difficult for this body and the other body to pass legislation to protect the pharmaceutical industries and the vaccine industries against class action lawsuits.

So the first thing I would say to the President was, get mercury out of all vaccines. That is very important.

Second, make the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program user friendly. Right now, people who have had children who have been damaged are losing their homes. They are having to mortgage everything they own to pay for