

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.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I am going to actually address that in a little bit.

It would also be unprecedented in our Nation's history.

Actually, in early 1864, as the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) just referred, President Abraham Lincoln feared that he would lose the Presidency due to 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.

Many of Lincoln's closest advisers urged him to postpone the election, but Abraham Lincoln never even considered that possibility, nor should we.

In response to calls for postponing the Presidential election, President Lincoln said the following in November of 1864: "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."

The fight against terrorism, like the Civil War, will affect more than a generation of Americans, but we must be smart, smart about how we address the threat of terrorism, and we must make sure that in this long fight we do not lose what we are fighting for in the first place.

There must be a way to both fight terrorism and also hold on to democratic ideals that make our country great, and Mr. Speaker, there is.

I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, the SMART security resolution, which provides a better way to address the threat of terrorism. SMART stands for Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism.

Preventing future acts of terrorism, SMART security is more vigilant than the President on fighting terror. Instead of emphasizing military force, it focuses on multilateral partnership and stronger intelligence capabilities to track and detain terrorists.

Unlike the defective and obtrusive USA Patriot Act, SMART security focuses on tracking and arresting those involved in terrorist attacks, while respecting human and civil rights.

Terrorism is an international problem, we all know that. So the fight against terrorism must involve the international community. That is why SMART security calls for working closely with the U.N. and NATO to achieve its goal. Only by actively involving other Nations in this fight can we hope to prevent future acts of terrorism.

In the spirit of being smart about our national security, I have written a letter to Secretary Ridge that has been signed by over 100 Members of Congress requesting that Secretary Ridge take no further steps to postpone this year's Presidential election. Wars, droughts, floods and hurricanes have not stopped elections, and the possibility of a terrorist attack must not stop one either. We cannot forget that elections are the

very basis upon which our great American democracy was founded.

To ensure that the upcoming Presidential election is not postponed by the alarmist Bush administration, I urge all of my colleagues to add their signatures to this important letter to Secretary Ridge.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL SPEECH

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to read a couple of statements from Bishop Smith of Trenton, New Jersey. The title of his little writing is called Bishop Smith calls for Freedom of Political Speech for the Catholic Church, and I would like to say that not only the Catholic church but the Protestant churches, the synagogues and the mosques in this country.

What I would like to read is: "At the Respect Life Mass for the Diocese on March 27 in St. James Church, Bishop Smith asked why, in our presumably democratic country, Catholic churches fear that the Internal Revenue Service will punish them if they speak out on politicians' positions on issues."

He further stated or wrote: "The First Amendment protects the free exercise of religion. Separation of church and state does not mean that the Church and its members should not voice or advocate for their positions. Separation of church and state is designed to ensure that there is no governmentally established religion."

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that because whether this would be a bishop of a Catholic faith or a Protestant minister or a Jewish rabbi or a cleric, they have the same problem. Most people do not know that from the beginning of this great Nation until 1954 that there was total freedom. They did know that. What they did not know, which is what I meant to say, is that in 1954 Lyndon Baines Johnson introduced an amendment on a revenue bill going through the Senate that was never debated. There were no committee hearings. There was no discussion of his amendment. In fact, at the time, the Democrats were the minority and the majority leader accepted the Johnson amendment without debate, unanimous consent.

I want to further add that Dr. James Davidson, a sociology professor at Purdue University who I have spoken to by telephone a couple of years ago, I want to read from some of his research and writing. He says, "The First Amendment speaks of religious freedom; it says nothing that would preclude churches from aligning themselves with or against candidates for public office . . . The courts also have never used Thomas Jefferson's celebrated 1802 metaphor about 'a wall of separation between church and state' to stifle churches' support of or opposition to political candidates."

I share that with my colleagues because, just recently, the bishop of Colorado Springs, Bishop Sheridan, wrote a pastoral letter, three pages which I have and read many times. Never in his pastoral letter did he say anything about President Bush or Candidate for the Presidency KERRY or about Democrats or Republicans. He just reminded the Catholics in his diocese, about 125,000, that the church stands for protecting the unborn. They are opposed to stem cell research. It protects the elderly.

So, therefore, in his letter basically what he said was that we, as Catholics, we stand for protecting life, and we, as Catholics, should think carefully during this next election. But, again, he never said the name of any candidate. He never said the name of any party, but because he used the word "pro-life," Barry Lynn, the Americans for Separation of Church and State, filed a complaint.

Well, one might say, well, Congressman, how can he file a complaint? He did not mention the candidate. He did not mention a party.

But what the IRS did in the early 1990s, they took the Johnson amendment and they expanded it through their rulemaking process, and now they have code words. Code words can be "pro-choice," "pro-life," "liberal," "conservative," "Democrat" or "Republican."

This, in my opinion, is not what this great Nation is about. It is not what we have men and women who have served this Nation during wartime from the beginning of America until today and tomorrow and as this war goes on in Iraq and Afghanistan, and yet these fine men and women that wear the uniform are there to protect freedom, not only to help the Iraqi people but freedom for the American people, and yet we have a law on the books that prohibits a member of the clergy from speaking out on the moral and political issues of the day.

Now, if this was 1953, Mr. Speaker, I would not even be on the floor, because there would be no problem. There was no law. But because of the Johnson amendment, we have elements in this country today that are on the extreme left that watch what our clergymen are saying about the policy and the politics of the day. I believe sincerely if the moral values of America are going to stand, then I believe that the freedom must ring in the churches and synagogues and the mosques of America, that they must have the freedom to speak freely about the issues of the day.

Again, I plan to be on the floor the next two or three nights and will continue to talk about this, because, as my colleagues know, outside of my office, 422, I have 12 posters. On each poster is about 60 faces of men and women who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have it there for a main reason, to remind the American people that freedom, there is a cost, and,