

THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHOULD
NOT HAVE RENEWED
BLACKWATER'S CONTRACT

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, only a week after the State Department renewed Blackwater's contract, the Bush administration was at it again giving more praise to Blackwater, the private military contractors. Last Friday, Ambassador Crocker said contractors "like Blackwater are absolutely essential."

But was it absolutely essential for Blackwater to gun down 17 innocent Iraqis? Was it absolutely essential for a Blackwater employee to kill a guard to the Vice President of Iraq? Was it absolutely essential for a Blackwater helicopter to drop CS gas on a traffic jam in Baghdad?

It has been months, and some in cases years, since these incidents and we still don't have the results of those investigations. Instead, our government has ignored those abuses and renewed Blackwater's contract and then a week later said they are absolutely essential. What kind of country do we live in where it's acceptable for the United States government to praise and reward a company that kills innocent people?

The only thing that is absolutely essential is that we end this State Department's dependence on private military contractors now.

WE NEED CAPABILITY TO CREATE
OUR NEW ENERGY

(Mr. WAMP asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, the nexus between national security, energy, and the environment is one of the most important issues of our time. And on energy, I'm an all-of-the-above Republican. It is wise to conserve, and we need to promote conservation. It is wise to advance energy efficiency technologies. We need to invest. But new capacity, new energy sources are also sorely lacking. We need new national gas supplies in this country. We need refinery capacity. We need our own oil, albeit limited. But we've got to, number one, grow our capability to create energy in our country to be energy independent.

I want to talk about nuclear energy because the cars of the future are going to run off of lithium batteries, some form of electric. We've got to have new capacity. We need nuclear energy in this country to be self-sufficient even on transportation. If we're going to reduce our carbon footprint, don't leave nuclear off the table.

This is a time to come together for new energy technologies, to promote an in-tech agenda, to actually balance the budget again with a robust manufacturing economy. It's pro-American.

DEVELOPING NEW SOURCES OF
FUEL

(Mr. BROUN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask for us Americans to consider what is going to be best for the people of this country and stop pandering to the environmental wackos.

We have to develop alternative sources of fuel. We have to tap into our own energy sources. We have to make nuclear energy easier to put in place, to build reactors, and to make it less costly to do so. We need to tap into our own oil sources. If we're going to lower the cost of gasoline, we have to build more refineries. If we're going to lower the cost of diesel fuel, we're going to have to tap into ANWR and off the gulf coast. It's absolutely critical for our economy to do this.

We need to look for alternative sources of energy but we have energy sources here today. Let's go get them.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 5715, into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO
STUDENT LOANS ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1107 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5715.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5715) to ensure continued availability of access to the Federal student loan program for students and families, with Mrs. TAUSCHER (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Wednesday, April 16, 2008, 34 minutes remained in general debate.

The gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) has 15½ minutes remaining and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) has 18½ minutes remaining.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, Members of the House, today we continue the consideration of H.R. 5715, the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008. This is legislation that was reported from the Committee on Education and Labor with unanimous bipartisan support. Once again today, I want to thank my colleagues on the committee on both sides of the aisle and the staff on both sides of the committee for working in a manner which allowed us to report this bill in very short order to the House for its consideration, and on working with the Department of Education, the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, for her cooperation in helping us with this legislation so that we can assure the parents, families, and students of this country that there will be no interruption in their access to student loans.

As the lending season starts to progress now, as students are getting their letters of acceptance, thinking about the next semesters of education and next year's education, as that lending season comes into its fullness, we want to make sure that there is no disruption.

We are concerned about a disruption because of the general disruption that is taking place in the Nation's credit markets, and specifically, concern about whether or not there will be a spillover onto the student loan markets so that students will have difficulty finding those loans.

We have worked with the Department of Education, we have worked with the administration, we have worked with the Republican members of the committee and our own caucus to devise a system of relief that is available to the Secretary and to the administration in the event that that should happen. And really what we're doing is three things: One, we're making sure that the existing law and the existing program for such an emergency, the Lender of Last Resort program, is functioning, that agreements are reached between the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Treasury, and we've been told by the Secretary of Education that she has informed the members of the committee that that has been done, that the Secretary meet with the guarantee agencies that might stand in the stead of those lenders that cannot make those loans to make sure that there is a smooth transition between them and the universities and colleges, and that that program is in place.

Also, that schools are aware that they can apply to qualify for the Direct Lending program. Many colleges and universities use that today. They may want to consider that so, again, there is smooth transition should the private lending market not be able to come forward with the student loans, they could direct their students to either of those two programs.

And, finally, to try and help the private sector credit markets for student loans, as this bill does, to give standby