

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

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

#### FAILURE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL TO APPOINT AN INDEPENDENT COUNSEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for over 2 years now, despite overwhelming evidence, the Attorney General of the United States has refused to follow the law and the recommendations of her FBI director and the chief campaign finance prosecutor to appoint an independent counsel in the campaign finance scandal. She has politicized the office over which she has control, the Justice Department of the United States. Reports about disarray in this investigation at the Justice Department abound.

After 2 years of this investigation, key players such as John Huang and James and Mochtar Riady, close friends of the President, have not been brought anywhere near to justice. White House and DNC officials are almost entirely off of the hook.

The Attorney General and her political advisors have inherent conflicts in making a decision about an investigation involving their boss, the President, and his closest friends. These conflicts are obvious to everyone but the Attorney General and the political appointees by the President made by the President at the Justice Department.

Last December, last December, we learned that FBI director Louie Freeh had recommended an independent counsel for the campaign finance investigation. He wrote that there could not be a more compelling case, there could not be a more compelling case for an independent counsel.

The Attorney General ignored his compelling and sound advice. Then the investigation continued to limp along with the Attorney General failing to focus on any of the key White House and DNC officials or even John Huang, the individual who solicited millions in illegal foreign money after being personally placed at the DNC, the Democratic National Committee, by Bill Clinton.

In fact, the core of the investigation should be focused on all of the foreign money that flowed into the DNC conference from around the world. Illegal campaign contributions from Macao, China, Taiwan, Egypt, Indonesia, and South America.

Yet the numerous 90-day reviews continually ignore this big picture and focus on isolated matters such as the Vice President's phone calls. We clearly had cause for concern even before the LaBella memo became known to the public.

The Attorney General before our committee said that, within 30 days, she would make a decision on an independent counsel. The 30 days have long past, even though our committee passed a contempt of Congress citation against the Attorney General. Thirty days have long since past. She has not appointed an independent counsel. Instead, she has extended by 90 days investigations into Mr. Ickes and the Vice President.

In July of this year, we learned that the chief prosecutor, Mr. Charles LaBella, who was appointed by the Attorney General, also recommended an independent counsel. He provided the Attorney General with a detailed 94-page memo outlining the specific information he had compiled which he informed her mandated by law, mandated the appointment of an independent counsel under the law. Again, the Attorney General ignored his advice. This is the man she personally appointed to head the investigation.

At that point, in late July, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight subpoenaed both the Freeh and LaBella memoranda in order to fully access the sound legal arguments which the Attorney General was rejecting. The Attorney General refused to provide the memos to the Congress. She refused to provide any legal rationale for her refusal.

On August 6, 1998, the committee held the Attorney General in contempt of Congress for failure to comply with a valid congressional subpoena. The committee still has not received the memos.

Earlier this month, we did have an opportunity to read through a redacted copy. That is where they cross out anything that is related to the Grand Jury investigation. We were able to read through a redacted version of the memorandum and meet with the Attorney General about this important document.

The Attorney General's claims that this redacted version of the LaBella memo would provide a road map to the investigation is simply not true. I read it. There is nothing of a road map to anything in there except the decisions made by the Attorney General which appear to be protecting the President and the Vice President of the United States.

I will not go into the content of the LaBella memo. The memo does confirm, as I said, our worst fears, that the

Attorney General of the United States, the one who is supposed to be the chief administrator of justice in this country, is clearly applying a different standard of law enforcement when it comes to the President and the Vice President than she does to any other American citizen. There is truly a dual standard, one for everybody except the President and the Vice President of the United States.

The Attorney General has taken what is obviously the White House position that the President is above the law in a way that no other citizen in this country can expect. There is something extremely wrong with the way that the Reno Justice Department dispenses justice, if you want to call it that. It is unseemly to have an Attorney General putting partisan interest above justice.

As the New York Times observed last December, "Every decision she has made and comment she has offered has minimized the offenses and excused the conduct of the White House and the Democratic Party. The person who is supposed to be the Nation's chief prosecutor, ever alert for the signs of infraction, sounds instead like a technicality hunting defense lawyer." This is a quote right out of the New York Times.

Indeed, when we met with the Attorney General regarding the LaBella memorandum, she exhibited this defense lawyer type of mentality or behavior. She refused to allow Mr. LaBella to explain his memo. And even though the public integrity chief Lee Radek, whose illogical views she has adopted as her own, was present at the meeting, the Attorney General refused to allow these individuals to speak for themselves and would not let them describe their reasons why they took the positions that they did.

I mean they were both sitting right there. I asked Mr. LaBella questions, and I asked Mr. Radek questions, and the Attorney General would not let them answer for themselves.

Mr. Radek, it should be noted, told the New York Times that he considers the independent counsel statute an insult and a knife in the back to top Justice Department officials. It is clear that Mr. Radek will continue to recommend that the Attorney General not follow a law which he does not like. What is amazing is that the Attorney General believes she can pick and choose what laws she wants to follow, even though the Congress of the United States has passed it.

Janet Reno did not always hold this position. When she first became Attorney General, she testified to the following regarding the independent counsel statute, and I quote the Attorney General directly: "The reason that I support the concept of an independent counsel is that there is an inherent conflict whenever senior Executive Branch officials are to be investigated by the Department of Justice and its appointed head." The Attorney General.