

My Republican friends on the other side of the aisle, especially their leadership, have raised millions of dollars from the drug industry. As a result, the drug industry and the insurance industry wrote the Medicare bill. That is why the Medicare bill simply will not work the way that it should, that is why drug profits continued to go up, that is why seniors continue to pay two and three and four times what they do in Canada.

We have got to break the leash and the connection between the drug industry and the Republican Party and President Bush.

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.)

EXPLAINING THE OIL FOR FOOD SCANDAL

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

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, Americans are just beginning to read and hear of something called the Oil for Food scandal. Well, what does that mean? What does that term mean? And, more importantly, why should Americans care?

Well, Mr. Speaker, for just a few minutes, I would like to try to answer those questions.

Over a dozen years ago, Mr. Speaker, right after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the world moved quickly to impose sweeping international sanctions on Iraq. Those sanctions were designed to force Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait and to follow international law on matters ranging from human rights to supporting terrorism to ending any pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

Because our beef was with Saddam Hussein and his evil regime and not with the Iraqi people, the Oil for Food program was created. It was established as a humanitarian way through the United Nations to try to offer some relief to the Iraqi people. It was intended to allow the Iraqi Government to sell limited quantities of oil, so long as the proceeds were used to purchase food, medicine, and other essentials for the Iraqi people.

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As I said, it was a humanitarian, compassionate gesture.

Now there is a scandal. There is a scandal, Mr. Speaker, because of growing evidence of the Oil For Food program was not only mismanaged, but used by Saddam Hussein for diabolical purposes. Some say the program is twisted by mismanagement. Some say it was twisted by corruption and greed.

Still others say that it was twisted by an anti-American agenda and bias.

So what happened that is so scandalous? Well, for one thing, Saddam Hussein used money, lots and lots of money, to buy things other than necessities for the Iraqi people. Not just small things like alcohol and cigarettes, but he used over \$2 billion to build palaces, monuments to himself and his evil regime. Even worse, he used some of that money to build his weapons and to launch his weapons program. This was money that would have gone to his people. Instead, this money went to perpetuate his evil regime and his lifestyle.

Secondly, because of alleged mismanagement and corruption within this U.N. program, billions of dollars that were procured are now missing. This was money that should be in the hands of the Iraqi people. Now more than ever, at the very time they need money for reconstruction, money to get back on their feet, money to build new schools, money to get ahead and build a brighter future, that money, \$10 billion worth, that money is gone.

Finally, and worst of all, some of this Oil For Food money was used by Saddam Hussein to pay off his cronies, allegedly to buy influence around the world, perhaps even in the United Nations itself, and to thwart the economic sanctions and diplomacy that we all hoped and prayed would avoid war. Lord forbid that this last point is true, because if it is true, if in fact some of this money was used to buy influence in the United Nations and other countries, it means that some of this money, it means that the Oil For Food program, it means that individuals within the United Nations and the international community, that their actions thwarted diplomacy and prevented sanctions from happening. And because diplomacy and sanctions failed, we went to war. And that means, Mr. Speaker, something that we all dearly hope is not true; that means that this corruption of this program led to the loss of American lives.

Mr. Speaker, this scandal involves billions of dollars, it involves mismanagement, it involves corruption, it involves illegal activity, and it may involve the kind of activity that costs lives, has lengthened this conflict, and perhaps even led to war.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, I and a number of other members of committees like the Committee on International Relations will come to this floor to ask publicly some important questions of the United Nations to try to get some answers, to learn more about the Oil For Food program, to find out whether there was, in fact, the corruption that we fear, and to try to get some answers. The American people deserve answers. The families of servicemen deserve answers. All of us deserve answers.

As I have said, I dearly hope that what we have read and what we have heard is not true, because if it is, as

William Safire of the New York Times has said, it would make it the most far-reaching political and financial scandal in history.

FOREST SERVICE UNDERFUNDED TO FIGHT FOREST FIRES IN 2004

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today, the Committee on Resources held a hearing on the coming fire season in the West. Officials of the Bush administration predicted that arguably, this could be the worst fire season in the Nation's history. So far, so good. They are looking out for our resources, our communities, our people.

Unfortunately, they went on to say that because the President shorted the budget and the Congress agreed with the President, that there is only about half the money in that budget that they expect they are going to need to fight the fires this year. Last year, a pretty bad fire season, but not the worst in history, the Forest Service ran out of money in August. Now, they cannot stop fighting the fires, so what do they do? Well, they go out and rob other Forest Service programs that are already underfunded. Over the last few years, they have gone and canceled fuel reduction contracts; that is, preventing the intensity or the possibility or probability of future fires through thinning and other activities, they actually would rob that program to pay for fighting this year's fires. But they do not learn their lesson.

Over the last 5 years, the average spent to fight fires by the Federal agencies has been \$1.2 billion. So what did the President ask for and the Republican Congress give him in this year's budget? Mr. Speaker, \$600 million, one-half of that amount. We are going into the worst fire year in history with less than one-half of the 5-year average. Even worse, just a few days ago, the Bush administration grounded all the tanker planes, because they cannot coordinate between the FAA and the BLM and the Forest Service and they cannot work out some paperwork on certifying whether or not these planes are safe or not. So our first line of defense, the heaviest line of defense we have, that which I know has saved the lives of firefighters and has saved homes and communities, is grounded.

Fourteen months ago I anticipated this problem and wrote to the Forest Service and they said, oh, do not worry, we have a plan. Their plan is a whole bunch of small planes and helicopters and yes, they can perform a valuable function, but they cannot get very quickly to distant fires, they cannot drop the huge loads that are sometimes needed to save a fire crew or stop a fire from breaching a hill and going down into a community or engulfing a

house. We will not have that tool this year, because they did not plan.

Now they say, well, they are trying to figure out where they might borrow the money to fight the fires. Might borrow the money. That means going back and decimating already underfunded programs in the Forest Service, maybe fuel reduction again, recreation most probably, capital investment improvements, all sorts of things that are detrimental to the resource and the public lands.

I have a novel idea. Why do they not instead be honest about how much money they need and come to the Congress from the White House with the President's support and ask for what they think they will need to fight this year's fires? Ask for another \$600 million. Yes, it is a lot of money, but we cannot ignore this problem. We could better prepare if they knew they had the money on hand. Instead of people scrambling around the Forest Service looking for other budgets to rob, they could be training more initial attack teams.

We got a report on the Biscuit Fire, a huge fire in southern Oregon a couple of years ago, which says there were no initial attack teams available. It is reported by some observers from California that the big southern branch of that fire was isolated to a couple of trees on one ridge on the first day. Now, if we had been able to get an initial attack team in there, but again, because of underfunding they were not available for days, we might have been able to prevent the whole southern branch of that cataclysmic fire.

So what is going to happen this year? They proudly say, well, they get 98 percent of those sorts of things. That is true. But if the 2 percent of the ones that they do not get, or even the 1 percent, are huge destructive fires that destroy resources, that destroy communities, that maybe even take lives, then is that not kind of a faulty way to save money? They say, well, we do not want all of those young people sitting around waiting for the initial attack teams; that would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Well, it cost \$200 million to fight that fire. So we could have spent a couple of thousand dollars to have young people trained. If there really are not any fires going on, let us put them out there and do some trail maintenance or something else; they can certainly do that work too if that is what we are paying them for. But when the fires are already starting to burn, to have them ready to go at a moment's notice is crucial and critical and could stop and prevent a huge catastrophic loss of resource, loss of life, loss of property.

That is a good Federal investment. I do not begrudge paying those young men and women who are going to risk their lives for a little bit of down time when we are going to use them sometimes 3, 4, 5, 6 days straight a week or 2 later.

So I find that this administration is just being so shortsighted. They can

see the problem: The most catastrophic predicted fire in history, they grounded the tanker planes, asked for and got only half the money they think they are going to need; we will lack the initial attack teams and a whole host of other things we need to do. We are going to short the communities for their fire prevention programs, their cooperative fire management and other things where we help communities fire-proof themselves and homeowners with a little bit of Federal matching money and assistance.

What is wrong with this administration? Why will they not ask for the money they need to protect our people, our communities, our resources?

SITUATION IRAQ: HAVING FAITH IN A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I spent most of my life in a competitive environment and, during that time, I tried to understand why some organizations are successful and why some fail and some win and some lose. It seems to me that in a competitive endeavor that three principles were critical.

Number one, unity of purpose; everyone having a common goal and pulling together. Number 2, the willingness to pay a greater price than the opposition; to sacrifice, to suffer, if necessary. And number 3, having confidence in a successful outcome to believe in the organization.

I believe that these principles are generally time-tested and proven. It seems to me that some of these principles might apply to our struggle in Iraq.

Recently I have heard some comments that the war is unwinnable. This is troubling, because it seems to me that words matter. Such statements are often self-fulfilling prophecies, because if you think you cannot, if you say you cannot, you probably cannot.

So what if a football coach or a coach of any kind told his team that they probably could not win? They probably would not win. What if Washington told his troops at Valley Forge that they could not win? It probably would have made a big difference in the final outcome. What if Lincoln had said after Antietam, where 26,000 casualties occurred in one day, the bloodiest single day in our history, if he had said, it is over, we cannot win? What if MacArthur had said this: Instead of saying he was going to return, what if he had said he was going to quit and go home? Or what if Eisenhower had said during the Battle of the Bulge that he could not be successful either?

Recently a Member of Congress came up to me and asked me this. He said, what is the exit strategy? I guess the way the question was phrased, it was how do we get out of this and somehow save face? How do we gracefully de-

part? I guess I did not have a good answer for him. As a matter of fact, I was puzzled because I had not really thought of that kind of an exit. I thought the exit strategy was to win. I did not know we had another exit strategy. The exit strategy, as I understand, was to displace the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, set up a representative government in both countries, train and equip each country's police and military to provide stability, and then leave. The rest of it, I believe, is up to the Afghan and Iraqi people. Much of this has been done already. It is certainly not completed, and certainly it is a difficult conflict and there is a lot yet to be done.

When I was in the Middle East not long ago, a young Reserve captain had been in Iraq for a nearly a year, and he said this: It is important that the American people not lose patience. I believe that is very true. He said this: He said, it is better to fight al Qaeda here in the Middle East than it is at home. He was proud of what he had accomplished over there militarily, in terms of the infrastructure, the water, the electricity, oil production, hospitals, schools, children being vaccinated, provisional governments being established.

So if we declare defeat, and if we say we cannot win, and if we say we have to pull out, it will do this: number one, we will dishonor the 750-plus soldiers who have died already, and their families.

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Number two, we will sentence thousands of Iraqis who have helped in the reconstruction to death. They will not have much chance, and this is the one thing they are most fearful of.

Number three, we will have shown terrorists everywhere around the world that we lack the will, we lack the courage to see this through. In other words, we will put a huge bulls-eye on our back.

So we all say on this floor time after time we support our troops; but, and I would say this, telling them that the war is unwinnable, engaging in partisan wrangling is not supporting our troops. It is critical that Members of this body stand united, stand committed and stay the course.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from California's (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) time.