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IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. *Delahunt*) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we are here again this evening. As I am sure many of our colleagues are aware, during the course of the past 8 months, several of us have taken to the floor to discuss issues surrounding Iraq, Afghanistan, and other issues of concern related to the war on terror, particularly as it is focused in the Middle East.

I am joined tonight by two members of that group. We call ourselves the Iraq Watch, my colleague who is sitting to my right, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. *Inslee*); and I know that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. *Strickland*) will soon join us.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield, there is some additional information he may be interested in that I have read in press accounts. Again, these are press accounts because our government to date has not shared this information with the public; but not only did this administration allow these people to leave without being fully interrogated by the FBI but the press accounts that we have read stated that while everybody else was grounded from traveling, and we know how many people had to drive across America to get home for a week or so after September 11, that this administration actually cleared a special jet that flew around the country as one of the only few planes flying in America at that time to pick up members of the bin Laden family to shepherd them out of this country as soon as possible. So not only did we not fully question these folks, we actually accommodated them flying around while John Q. Citizen could not fly himself to get from Dubuque back to Seattle.

Let me also indicate that to my knowledge, and again we do not have full information from our administration to date, but to our knowledge these people have never been interrogated by the FBI, even today, about what happened. And now we have a war in Iraq, rather than adequate research and interrogation of Saudi citizens today as to what happened on September 11.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think it is legitimate to ask this question: Were these Saudis, were these members of Osama bin Laden's family given special treatment? Why would they have been given special treatment? Can you imagine how we would have felt, how we would have reacted if those who piloted those planes into our trade towers had been Iraqi citizens? Or Syrian citizens? Can you imagine

how we would have reacted if there had been relatives of Iraqis or of Saddam Hussein in this country after such an attack? Why were the Saudis given such special treatment? Could it be because of the oil and because of the close connection between the oil industry and the Saudi government and the Bush family and the Saudi royal family? I think these are questions that deserve to be answered.

I think Attorney General Ashcroft should answer questions regarding who made the request that these citizens be allowed to leave the country without questioning. I think we should find out for certain that the FBI had said they had no interest in questioning them. I cannot imagine the FBI within days of the towers being struck saying we have no interest in questioning relatives of Osama bin Laden. I just cannot imagine that that is the case.

Mr. INSLEE. I feel very strongly that these are just some of the questions that our government has a duty to answer. One of the reasons I feel so strongly about that is that this afternoon, I had a very painful discussion with a family in Bremerton, Washington, with whom I have been working for about a week or two now whose son and husband has been missing in Iraq, a soldier in Iraq. I have been working with this family to try to do what we could to assuage their concerns and make sure that we were doing everything we could to bring him home. Today I had to talk with that family, and they found out this morning that their son and husband would never be returning to them.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think it is appropriate that we bring this back to the human price that is being paid for our policies, because Sunday evening back in my district in southeastern Ohio, I visited a funeral home, attended the wake of a young soldier who had just returned, a man leaving a 14-year-old son, a 5-year-old daughter, three sisters, a mother, and wife. Saturday morning I went to the air base in Youngstown, Ohio. I met with about 30 soldiers and their families and their children; and in that early morning hours as the snow was falling, I saw those soldiers get on that plane, and I saw that plane take off down that snowy runway and disappear into the heavens. Tonight those soldiers are in the desert. The fact is that as we talk about the policies of our Nation, I do think it is appropriate, and I thank the gentleman from Washington for bringing our attention to the fact that we talk about policies, we talk about decisions in an almost theoretical sense sometimes here, but the fact is that there are real families, real soldiers, real deaths, real injuries.

I also, and I will end my remarks with this, over this past weekend was able to attend a happy occasion because I went to the homecoming party of a young soldier who had just returned from Iraq. He was there with his grandfather, his father and his 4-year-old son, four generations. The mother of this 4-year-old son, the wife of this young soldier who had just returned, told me that during this soldier's absence, their 4-year-old son was so disturbed that the pediatrician suggested that he may need to go see a child psychiatrist, and she said his daddy is home and he is back to normal. Everything that we do here in this Chamber, but especially the decisions that we make regarding war and peace, affect real people, real families. I think we should never, ever forget that.

I thank the gentleman for bringing up that situation that occurred in his district as well as giving me a chance to talk about the situation in my district.

Mr. INSLEE. Unfortunately, all of us probably in every district have had these tough times with families.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I can tell of a very sad moment when I attended a funeral in my hometown of a young man, 36 years old. His widow was there; his parents were there. His dad, Charlie Caldwell,

taught my daughter in the local public school. He was killed. He was killed in a humvee. When we pause and think of it, the pain that this has caused. We have had this discussion before. Not only is it causing pain today; but in very real terms with the cost of this effort, if you will, we have already spent \$187 billion. And while it is not in the President's budget, because clearly he has an interest in not increasing the deficit any more than it is and it is absolutely out of control, we know that and I think the American people know that, but we hear, and it has been reported that there is an additional \$50 billion that will be in a supplemental. Of course, it will not happen before the election...

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, because he is bringing up moral authority, which is very important; and we were talking about the families we have been working with who have lost their sons and daughters in Iraq, and there is a moral obligation by the United States Government to come forward and answer some of these questions that we have been asking tonight. And the gentleman mentioned something about reading and some folks may find some reading material of interest. I want to refer to people about a moral question that our government owes to the American people, and that is the question of how this war was started based on what, according to Mr. Kay, was a false premise.

The people of this country, the families who have servicepeople serving in Iraq, those who have lost members of their families, they deserve a clear, cogent, and complete answer of how a war was started based on a false premise about what the status of weapons was in Iraq. And the gentleman mentioned things he was reading. I read something extremely disturbing to me this weekend. It was printed in the Knight Ridder newspapers. I read it in the Seattle Times February 10, an article entitled "Doubts and Dissent Removed from Public Report on Iraq. Secret version President Bush received was more cautious about threat."

We know at this point, according to Mr. Kay, our expert in the field and now even according to the President apparently, that the premise that gave rise to this war was false about the status of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And that is disturbing enough. It is it disturbing for our soldiers and sailors. It is disturbing of our standing in the world, starting a war on a false premise. But this article was more disturbing to me because the conclusion and premise of this article was not only was this premise false but that the

Government of the United States of America in a sense distorted in significant ways the nature of intelligence that it had available to it before the war started. For instance, and again this is in the newspaper, and I cannot vouch for its authenticity. It makes reference to some intelligence reports. This is not coming from myself. It is coming from the Seattle Times and the Knight Ridder newspaper. But they made reference to a statement essentially by the President that there is no doubt, and that is a quote from this President, that the President of the United States looked at the American people and said there is no doubt, no doubt, that Iraq had some of the most lethal weapons systems devised by man before this war started.

But this article disclosed that the intelligence reports given to the President of the United States showed there was tremendous doubt about this situation. And I will quote from this article: "Whereas the President of the United States was essentially saying there is no doubt that Iraq had reconstituted, in the words of the Vice President, a nuclear program." Listen to what the intelligence report said, according to this article, that was given to the President of the United States. This was an intelligence report prepared by the State Department's intelligence arm, which is called the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, known as the INR.

This is a quote. That report said ``the activities we have detected do not, however, add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq may be doing so, but INR considers the available evidence inadequate to support such a judgment." The report goes on to say, ``INR is unwilling to project a timeline for the completion of activities it does not now see happening."

So while the President of the United States, the leader of the free world, was telling the world and American soldiers and sailors and citizens that there was no doubt that this country had a meaningful, real, and contemporaneous nuclear program, our own intelligence services, at least one of them, was telling him they did not think so. This was not told to the American people. And even if one believes today that this war was totally justified based on the civil rights of the Iraqi citizens, and I respect people who have that view, even if one believes that, it is a moral wrong not to share this information with the American people and the U.S. Congress when this debate is going on.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. INSLEE. I have one more point I want to be sure I make, but I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, when the President was interviewed on Sunday, he told the American people that the Congress had the same intelligence available to them as he had available to him. And that was not true. No one told us that there was ambiguity. The President and the Vice President spoke with surety. They said, as the gentleman has pointed out, there was no doubt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I should interrupt the gentleman to say that Secretary Powell made that statement again. And not having had the opportunity because he left early, I was stunned by that particular remark. I do not know any Member in this body that had these different reports. With the caveats and the qualifiers, what we got was something different, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STRICKLAND. We cannot even find out who served on the Vice President's energy task force, let alone have access to all the intelligence that the President has available.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, let me make a point, because I think it is important. It is not just this nuclear threat. As the gentlemen know, Condoleezza Rice made repeated references to the mushroom cloud, which is a most disturbing image to all of us having suffered through September 11, and a real potential threat from Iran and North Korea. But it is not just the nuclear threat, but the American people were not given the full scoop in this regard.

The gentlemen will recall when the President and others made repeated references to the unmanned aerial vehicles that they told us was a threat to the continental United States, that Iraq could fly over American cities and spray biological material over the United States and none of us can always ever eliminate any threat. Today somebody may be planning to do that today as we speak. I do not want to be Pollyanna-ish about this, but the President told us that our intelligence services were telling us that was going on.

According to this article, let me tell the gentlemen what the United States Air Force was telling the President of the United States. What it said was: ``The Air Force does not agree that Iraq is developing UAVs, unmanned aerial vehicles, primarily intended to be delivery platforms for chemical and biological warfare, CBW agents. The small size of Iraq's new UAV strongly suggests a primary role of

reconnaissance, although CBW delivery is an inherent capability." We were told that Iraq was developing these weapons that could fly over Philadelphia and spray biological and anthrax over it when the Air Force was telling the President of the United States they did not believe that was the case.

Let me finish one more point. During our national debate, I respected the President of the United States' statement that Saddam Hussein was a tyrant and a thug and was massively abusive to his own people, and perhaps he rightfully argued that he believed preemptive action was appropriate. That is an argument we would respect and listen to. But during this national debate, before this President sent our citizens to die in the sands of Iraq, he did not owe us 30 percent of the truth. He did not owe us 75 percent of the truth. He owed us the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Hans Blix, who was defamed mightily by this administration prior to this war, I think said it best when he got this information. He said, ``We deserve more than what a car salesman might give. We deserve the whole truth."

If these reports are accurate, again, I have not seen these, but I read about them in the newspaper, if these reports are accurate, we need to get to the bottom of what happened here. That is why this commission that the President has appointed needs to take it upon itself not only to look at the bureaucracy at the Central Intelligence Agency, but they need to know why the President of the United States and his administration was not entirely forthcoming about the intelligence in this regard.