

## August 11, 2006 - Oh, the Irony - Again

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Realities in Washington Make a Mockery of White House's "National Strategy" to Combat High-Level Corruption

Washington, DC &ndash; Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, issued the following statement today in response to the White House's statement on its new commitment to preventing a &ldquo;culture of corruption&rdquo; from undermining the governments of foreign nations:

"If this Administration wants to pick a fight with corrupt officials, it doesn't have to go looking around the world. It doesn't even have to leave Washington. Republicans need to look in the mirror and apply this new "National Strategy" to themselves.

&ldquo;Instead of lecturing other nations about transparency and accountability, this White House ought to focus on its Republican colleagues in Congress mired in allegations of money laundering and bribery. And it should care about the total collapse of ethical conduct in the House of Representatives.

&ldquo;While the current Republican Administration is talking about the dangers of a 'culture of corruption' abroad, an unprecedented level of corruption has come to define Congress and this federal government under Republican leadership.

"Here at home, special interests are walking away with billions of dollars in tax breaks, subsidies, and federal contracts, while Americans must live with the bad laws our broken system produces. The political corruption we associate with now-notorious figures such as Tom DeLay, Bob Ney, Duke Cunningham, and Jack Abramoff comes at a very real cost to each and every one of us."

Rep. Slaughter continued: "Transparency, accountability, and honest feedback are foreign concepts to this White House. Over last few years, there has been one example after another showing how this Administration has no desire to subject its ideas to either the impartial scrutiny of career professionals or to the honest evaluation of the American people. It is obsessed with getting its way and hiding its failings.

"Those with dissenting viewpoints, no matter how knowledgeable they may be, are eliminated instead of consulted. The result has been the whittling away of institutions the citizens of this nation have trusted for generations to keep them safe and to keep our country moving in the right direction."

## BACKGROUND

On August 10th, the White House released a statement announcing a new initiative known as "The National Strategy to Internationalize Efforts against Kleptocracy." It is theoretically designed to combat high-level corruption currently undermining governments around the world. An excerpt from the statement is included below:

"For too long, the culture of corruption has undercut development and good governance and bred criminality and mistrust around the world. High-level corruption by senior government officials, or kleptocracy, is a grave and corrosive abuse of power&hellip;It threatens our national interest and violates our values. It impedes our efforts to promote freedom and democracy, end poverty, and combat international crime and terrorism&hellip;Promoting transparent, accountable governance is a critical component of our freedom agenda&hellip;

"&hellip;Today, I am announcing a new element in my Administration's plan to fight kleptocracy, The National Strategy to Internationalize Efforts against Kleptocracy, which sets forth a framework to deter, prevent, and address high-level, public corruption&hellip;

"Our objective is to defeat high-level public corruption in all its forms and to deny corrupt officials access to the international financial system as a means of defrauding their people and hiding their ill-gotten gain&hellip; "

To read the statement in full, [click here](#):

"America for Sale: The Cost of Republican Corruption," a report released by Representative Louise Slaughter this past February, provided a comprehensive review and analysis of the major ethics scandals which have shaken Washington during the last five years of Republican rule. To view the report in its entirety, [click here](#).

"America for Sale" reveals how deep the culture of corruption nurtured by the Republican Party's leadership goes, explaining in detail how, under the control of the Republican party:

\*14.2 million American seniors (including millions of our sickest and most vulnerable seniors) are stuck in a complicated, expensive, and inefficient Medicare prescription drug program because the Republican Congress and the Bush Administration allowed lobbyists from the insurance and pharmaceutical industries to design this program.

\*60 million American families who heat their homes with natural gas and 8 million families who heat with heating oil are paying higher bills last winter, even though the Republican Congress recently passed their "national energy plan" into law. Although this plan gives the energy industry billions in new tax breaks and subsidies, it doesn't lower prices for consumers or make our country more energy independent.

\*The 150,000 U.S. troops currently deployed in Iraq may not have the equipment they need because of waste, fraud and cronyism by the Republican Congress and the Department of Defense. While Halliburton and other companies with Republican connections get no-bid, sole-source contracts, our soldiers still don't have the body armor and armored vehicles they need to fight the war.

\*More than 10 million students and their families will have larger student loans to repay because House Republicans, led by new Majority Leader John Boehner working hand-in-hand with his commercial loan industry allies, cut \$12 billion from the student loan program in the recent reconciliation bill and shifted the costs on to students and their families.

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