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Item-in-KAA: OCHA - UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance in Baghdad

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May 20, 2004

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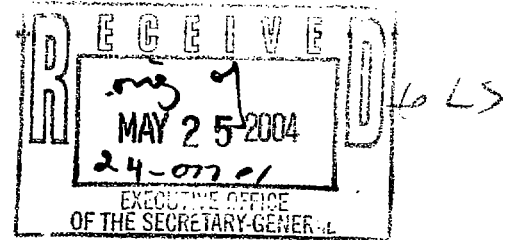
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His Excellency Kofi A. Annan
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Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

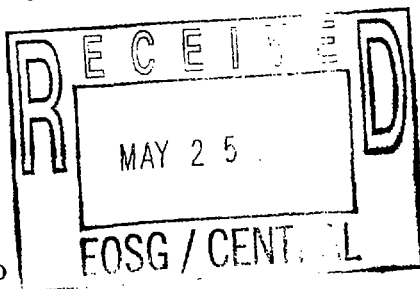


Permit me to express my deep concern about the conclusions contained in a reputed United Nations internal audit regarding the Oil for Food program that surfaced today in various media reports. Earlier today, I forwarded the document to investigators in the U.S. General Accounting Office to determine its authenticity. Your assistance in confirming the document's authenticity and accuracy would be greatly appreciated. A copy of the document is attached for your review.

I am grateful for the work of journalists reporting on allegations of corruption in the Oil for Food program. However, the U.S. Congress – which provides 22 percent of the UN's budget and which has publicly requested copies of the 55 internal audits – should not be required to depend on media leaks for source documents.

In particular, I am concerned about the reputed audit's conclusion that a principle UN contractor, Cotecna, which provided vital inspection services for the program, maintained lower-than-required staff levels in Iraq, overcharged the UN, and failed to provide 24-hour/7 day-per-week inspection services as required under its contract with the UN. I am further concerned about the audit's conclusion that, in spite of repeated warnings, the UN Office of Iraq Programs did nothing to correct these oversights. If the document is valid, the criticism by the UN's own internal auditors poses serious questions about the operation of the Oil for Food Program, the work of contractors, and the UN Secretariat's failure to supervise the program.

The nature of the allegations against the United Nations and the urgency of getting to the truth require that all 55 internal audits be released immediately to the U.S. Department of State for review. This is fully within your authority to do so and consistent with the terms of the Vockler inquiry.



Sincerely,
Henry Hyde
HENRY J. HYDE
Chairman

HJH:fcr/mco