

# OPINION

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## Iraq: Preemptive Attacks Would Set a Dangerous Precedent

Congressman Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., issued the following response to President Bush's speech before the United Nations last week calling for military action against Iraq:



Rep. Earl Blumenauer

Like most people in our community, I am deeply troubled by proposals to launch a preemptive attack against Iraq. Saddam Hussein is without question an evil and dangerous person who has inflicted great harm on his own people. However, one can have the lowest opinion of Saddam Hussein and still have great reservations about the calls for an attack. There is as yet

no connection between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks on the United States last year. At Johannesburg I heard first hand from our European allies, who were so helpful after September 11th and who were part of the Desert Storm operation, that they are adamantly opposed to the United States taking action against Iraq at this time. The case has not been made either to the American public or to Congress, whose authorization would be required to engage in an act of war.

It is an extraordinarily dangerous precedent for the United States or any nation to attack another country without direct provocation. We have not done so in the past and we have

condemned those who have acted in this fashion.

We have just begun this national debate in earnest. I look forward to doing my part as a member of the International Relations Committee and will work to make sure that the reservations and concerns I have heard from Oregonians are reflected in this important national debate. Even the United States, as the world's most powerful nation heading a multinational coalition with almost universal world support, has not been able to stabilize Afghanistan. As some seek to expand our campaign to Iraq and perhaps beyond, we need to be especially careful to handle this unfolding situation with all the care and deliberation we can muster.

## Spreading the Word About Good Health for African Americans

"Closing the Health Gap" is a new partnership between the federal government and various other organizations including the African American Coalition of Portland and southwest Washington to spread the word about good

health and prevention directly to African-American citizens.

African-Americans suffer disproportionately from diabetes, heart disease and other medical problems.

"As a nation, we need to work aggressively to close this gap," said Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson.

The campaign is designed to inform, educate, challenge and empower African-Americans to change behaviors through providing lifestyle tips and information on local sources of health care and public health problems.

"Educating our communities to seek preventive healthcare is critical," said Corliss McKeever, president of the African American Health Coalition. "This is a very important initiative for the African-American community, and I am proud to play an active role."

HHS has made eliminating health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minority populations a critical goal of Healthy People 2010, the nation's public health agenda for the current decade. For instance, African-Americans are twice as likely to die from diabetes than whites.

Overall, the average life expectancy for African-Americans at birth is 71.8 years, com-

pared to 77.4 years for the whites, according to the latest available statistics.

"The 'Closing the Health Gap' campaign addresses the major health threats confronting African-Americans, including diabetes, breast cancer, heart disease and stroke, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, substance abuse, suicide and

violence," said McKeever. "It will also promote organ donation and improved rates of child and adult immunizations, and address health issues among women and older adults."

Area residents are encouraged to help in this effort by at-

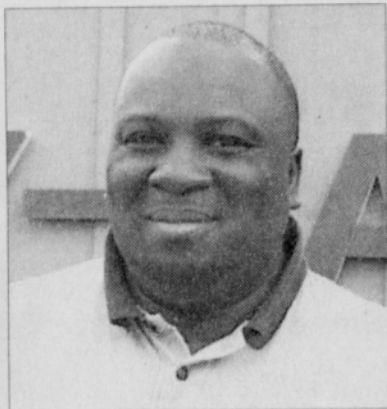
*Educating our communities to seek preventive health care is critical.*

— Corliss McKeever, president of the African American Health Coalition.

tending the group's 2002 Wellness Village, Oct. 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Blazer Boys & Girls Club on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The event will feature free health screenings, free workshops and free health exhibits.

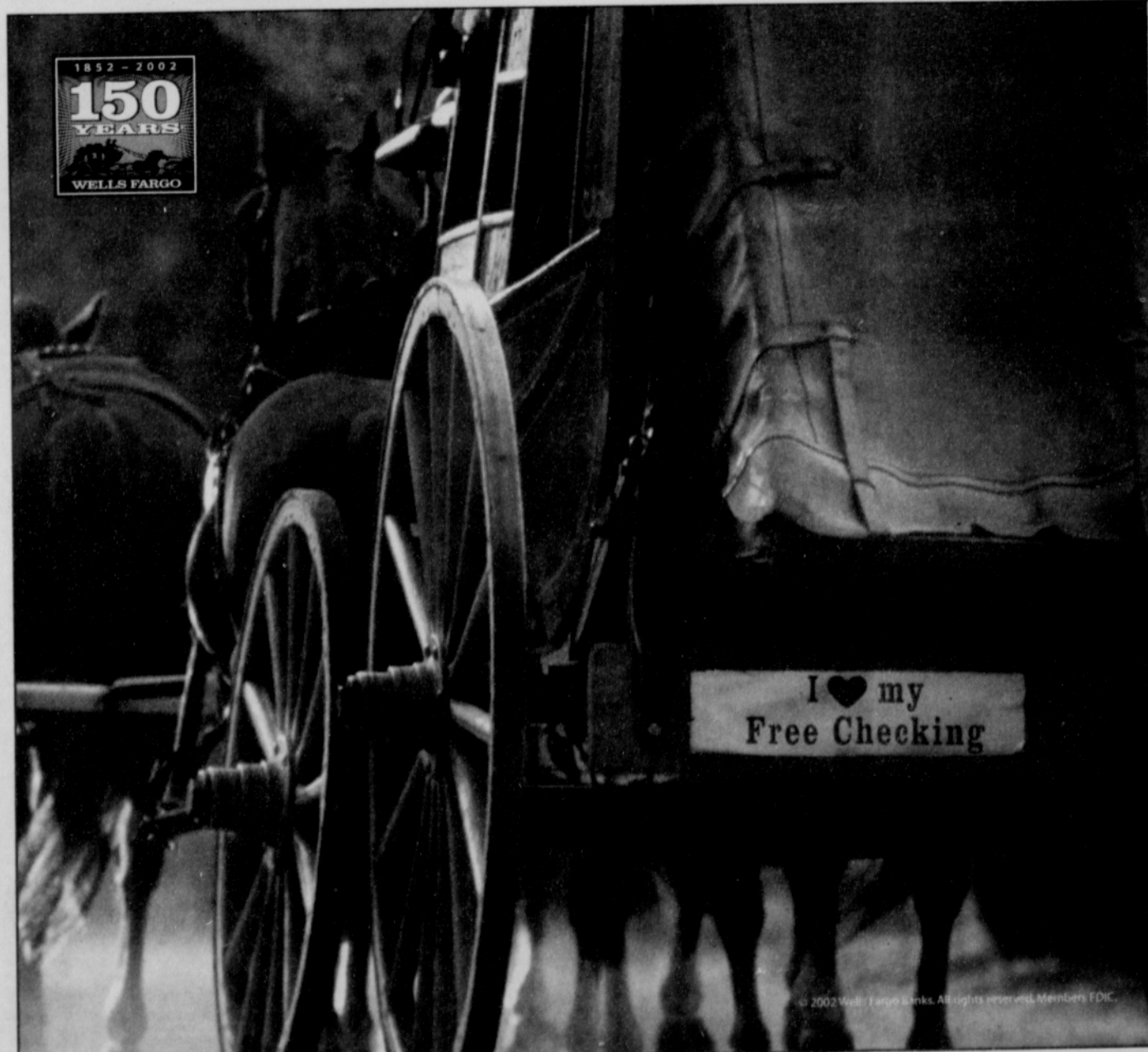
You can find more by going to the website at [www.aahc-portland.org](http://www.aahc-portland.org) or by calling Karen Gress at 503-413-1850.

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