United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 152 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2006 No. 96

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Phil Fulton, Pastor, Union Hill Church, Peebles, Ohio, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and all that is therein, we thank You for this great congressional body. I pray You would bless them with wisdom, knowledge, and that the spirit of bipartisanship would prevail in all their decisions for the inherent good of this great Nation.

I pray they would remember well the words of President Cleveland: ''That those who manage the affairs of government are by this means reminded that the law of God demands that they should be courageously true to the interests of the people, and that the Ruler of the Universe will require of them a strict account of their stewardship.''

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1036. An act to amend title 17, United States Code, to make technical corrections relating to Copyright Royalty Judges, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 418. An act to protect members of the Armed Forces from unscrupulous practices regarding sales of insurance, financial, and investment products.

S. 3693. An act to make technical corrections to the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.

WELCOMING REVEREND PHIL FULTON

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Reverend Phil Fulton, who is serving as guest chaplain for the House of Representatives today.

Reverend Fulton is from Adams County which is located in the district I represent. Reverend Fulton was born and raised in southern Ohio, and now serves our community daily.

For the last 30 years, he has worked as pastor of Union Hill Church, an independent community church which is located in Peebles, Ohio. He plays a very active role in our local area, helping those around him.

As vice president of Love, Incorporated, he has reached out to many folks by meeting their intimate needs in a very personal way. He is chairperson of the Ten Commandments Committee which is working on issues related to the display of the Ten Commandments in public places.

Reverend Fulton is not only an active member of our community, but he is also a devoted member of his family. He has been married to his lovely wife, Sharon, for 40 years, and they have two children and five very energetic grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in welcoming Reverend Phil Fulton to the House of Representatives as our guest chaplain.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 10 one-minute requests per side.

PROTECTING EMBRYOS RIGHT THING TO DO

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, constituents throughout my district have been contacting my office in opposition to using embryonic stem cells for research purposes. They join me today in applauding the President's veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

As stewards of hardworking Americans' tax dollars, we cannot ask our constituents to fund the killing of human embryos. It is imperative that we do all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, the unborn.

Embryonic stem cells have been available for research for nearly 5 years, and during that time research on those stem cells has produced nothing and cured no one. In the meantime, ethical biomedical treatment not derived from embryos, like that at the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine in my district, has helped cure over 70 diseases. In this time of incredible medical advances, unethical research is unnecessary and desecrates the sanctity of human life.

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PREPARE FOR PEACE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, how is it that even with the constant moral and financial support of our Nation, our friend and ally, Israel, is still not safe and secure. If we insist upon the security and survival of Israel, and we must, then we must also insist upon the security and survival of the Palestinians and the Lebanese.

We say we will never negotiate with those who have sworn to destroy us or our allies, but history shows us that every conflict was resolved by doing exactly that. We prepare for war so grandly; let us prepare for peace grandly by looking fearlessly and deep into the hearts of those who wish us harm, and find that spark of recognition that connects us to a common humanity and from that draw a flicker of hope to enkindle the warm glow of peace.

After 9/11, we asked, Why do they hate us? Isn't it time for us to ask, Why do we hate them?

Do we think about what hate does to our own hearts? Isn't it time to put on the invincible armor of human compassion to explore human relations as the science of the human heart, in which we always have the capacity through courage, communication, patience and understanding to turn hate into love, and to beat our swords into plowshares.

LONE STAR VOICE: CHARLES HAMILTON

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Americans pay millions a year of their money in health care costs for illegals. Now it is time for those renegade businesses that hire illegals and the Mexican Government to pay.

Charles Hamilton of Spring, Texas, writes me: ''Texas taxpayers should not be made to pay the brunt for the high concentration of illegals here that the Feds won't stop from coming into our country. It might be an incentive for employers not to hire illegals if a tax was levied on each illegal hired. Employee rosters showing names and Social Security numbers should be checked for each company each year. Companies with illegals would pay a tax to cover the illegals' hospital costs.''

Mr. Speaker, Dallas County, Texas wants to bill or even sue Mexico for the hospital costs of illegals. But get this: The Mexican consulate arrogantly says, ''You can't do that, it is illegal.''

Mr. Speaker, the coconspirators of businesses that exploit illegals and the Mexican Government that encourages illegal entry need to pay for this health care. It is morally wrong to expect American citizens and legal immigrants to pay.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise disappointed and angered by the President's veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, and I rise in solidarity with my 237 colleagues and the 63 Senators who voted to overturn the Bush administration's policies that have stifled the promise of stem cell research and sound and ethical science.

Since 2001, stem cell research in the United States has been thwarted by the Bush administration's misguided policies. And yesterday, President Bush once again let politics, not science, not the health and well-being of American families, and not the will of the majority of Americans, dictate his decision making.

It is a sad day when the President of the United States acts to impede life-saving medical research. And with this veto, President Bush failed to give American families the promise of this research. American families want cures, not politics. And they want hope, not lost opportunities.

I, along with millions of Americans, am outraged, but we are not deterred. We will keep fighting and we will succeed in fighting the President's restrictions on stem cell research.

Those of us who voted to override the presidential veto, voted:

to maintain the United State's stance as the world leader in medical research and scientific advancement;

to advance scientific discovery in an ethically and responsible manner;

to enhance the ability of medical professionals to care for their patients;

to fulfill our obligation to use our human resources and capital for the greater good; and

most importantly, to benefit the millions battling disease and injury.

TRIBUTE TO SECRETARY NORMAN MINETA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, for more than 5 years, we have been honored to have Norman Mineta serve as Secretary of Transportation, selected by President Bush, to be the longest-serving Secretary in American history.

Secretary Mineta served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army in both Japan and Korea. He was the 59th mayor of San Jose, California, and served as a Member of Congress for 20 years. He was the first Asian American elected mayor of a major city, and the first to hold a Cabinet position when he served as Secretary of Commerce from 2000 to 2001.

As the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta oversaw an agency with almost 60,000 employees and a $62 billion budget. Created in 1967, the department brought under one umbrella air, maritime, and surface transportation missions. Today, I honor his service to the American people and wish him and his wife, Deni, the best in their future endeavors.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

PRESIDENTIAL VETO WRONG

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, when I voted to override President Bush's veto of stem cell research, I was thinking of ex-Governor Booth Gardner of Washington State. I saw Governor Gardner in the Sea-Tac Airport Monday as I was flying back here. He was flying to San Francisco for advanced treatment for Parkinson's, a disease he has been battling for some time with great courage and grace.

And yet this promising research, we have a President who decided he is not going to let Americans have because he, from his exalted realm on Pennsylvania Avenue, has taken it upon himself to dictate to Americans what our morals should be.

Let me suggest that the President who started the war in Iraq based on false information, the President that mishandled Hurricane Katrina relief, the President who has created the largest deficit in the history of the solar system, is not entitled by any law, religion, morality, ethics or common sense to dictate to the American people one sense of morality, much less any others.

It was wrong for him to deny Booth Gardner treatment, it is wrong for him to take it away from millions of Americans.

SUPPORT HOMEOWNERS TAX RELIEF ACT

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge passage of the Homeowners Tax Relief Act. I have introduced this act to help bring much-needed property tax relief to middle-class families.

Taxes are one of the most critical issues our constituents face. When I talk with residents of the Hudson Valley in my New York district, they repeatedly tell me they are at wit's end because their property tax rates are increasing faster than their incomes.

We have passed significant tax relief legislation in this Congress, but we can do more to show our constituents that we are committed to tax cuts, not tax increases.

My legislation is particularly aimed to help middle-class families. It would enable homeowners to deduct on their Federal tax forms the amount of property and school taxes that they pay in excess of the national average. This also brings a first-of-its-kind property tax deduction to residents who use the standard deduction. The IRS estimates that two-thirds of taxpayers use the standard deduction. They would be able to get this tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, both Republican and Democrat cosponsors are on my bill. We need to move it forward to bring additional tax relief to middle-class families in New York and throughout the country.

VOTE ''NO'' ON OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, last night several of our colleagues stood on this floor and listed all of the terrorists that are no longer threats to the United States. I couldn't be more pleased that this list of potential threats is getting shorter. So why are we going to vote today on a proposal that will add major new threats to that list?

The Oman Free Trade Agreement would require the United States to allow any Omani company to provide landside U.S. port activities if they so choose. A new CRS report confirms that fact.

We know that al Qaeda wants to launch more attacks here. Do you think that this deal presents a golden opportunity for al Qaeda to infiltrate our ports, to smuggle weapons of mass destruction into the United States?

Last year more than 11 million cargo containers entered the United States. Do you want a company in Oman managing this flow of who knows what into our borders? Would you let any company that operates in Oman run our airport security?

The Oman Free Trade Agreement hands over the keys to any company that operates in Oman. Think about it, and vote ''no'' on this stupid, ridiculous deal.

When the American people find out about the port provision of this agreement they will be outraged.

□ 1015

PIEDMONT HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate two Georgia hospitals, Piedmont and Piedmont Fayette, which this month were named two of the Nation's Most Wired Hospitals by a Benchmarking survey.

The Piedmont health care group is known for its longstanding commitment to health information technology. With this award, the whole Nation now understands how these hospitals are using electronic medical records, e-prescribing, and digital radiology to help streamline practices and to reduce medical errors.

I am a strong supporter of health information technology because it saves lives, time, money. And as a physician, I know that encouraging the adoption of health care technology is one of the most important ways we can work to lower costs while also raising quality of care.

This is why I have introduced legislation to incentivize more physicians to adopt information technology. And I hope the success of Piedmont health care will encourage other providers to look at the real savings that this technology offers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating Piedmont for their leadership in the field of health information technology.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS FAIL TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF REAL CONCERN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, all year long House Republicans have failed to provide real leadership on issues that affect Americans. Earlier this month the Associated Press reported that President Bush had only signed two substantial bills into law this year.

And, now, House Republicans want to spend the entire week distracting and dividing our Nation with pieces of legislation that will never be signed into law. This is not what the American people sent us here to do.

They have yet to join us in offering a stand-alone vote to increase the minimum wage, which about 60 to 70 percent of people polled said they agree with.

Because of their cozy relationship with Big Oil, they have yet to provide American consumers any relief at the gas pump. In my district it is over $3.35.

Earlier this year, House Republicans promised they would clean up the place after several Republican lobbyists pleaded guilty in the Abramoff scandal. But still we have yet to pass any final legislation.

Mr. Speaker, no wonder House Republicans are trying to distract the American public. This is not a record I would want to run on either.

FISCAL MISMANAGEMENT

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, last year's highway authorization bill, better known as SAFETEA–LU, which brought us the bridge to nowhere, seems to be a gift that keeps on giving. It has now cleared the path for a program that may set a standard for fiscal mismanagement and favoritism by the Federal Government.

Thanks to changes made to the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing, or RRIF, program in SAFETEA–LU, the administration is considering awarding one of the largest loans to a private company in the history of the United States. This would be a $2.5 billion loan to the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroads, or DM&E, a loan larger than the Chrysler bail-out.

SAFETEA–LU expanded the loan authority of the RRIF program from $3.5 billion to $35 billion and removed any prohibition on the size of any single loan, paving the way for the DM&E loan application.

If drastically expanding the program's loan authority opened the door for DM&E, a handful of other changes to the program all but drive the loan application home.

Mr. Speaker, the RRIF program is on the verge of being used to provide a competitive advantage. It is inappropriate for the taxpayers to finance it.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS ARE PREVENTING MEDICAL ADVANCES

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the editorial in yesterday's USA Today, entitled ''Bush Readies First Veto, Dashing Hopes of Millions,'' says it all. The editorial begins: ''A quarter-century from now, when the benefits of embryonic stem cell research are finally realized, Americans are likely to shake their heads in astonishment at this week's events in Washington.''

But President Bush is not the only one to blame. House Republicans had a chance to join us in overriding the President's veto. They refused. Instead, they rubber-stamped the wishes of the President and, in doing so, dashed the hopes of millions of Americans.

The legislation offered us a real opportunity to find cures for diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancer and MS that are currently afflicting millions of Americans. This research has been put on hold for far too long by an administration that chooses to stifle groundbreaking science.

Mr. Speaker, this was a golden opportunity for this Congress to give scientists and researchers the tools they need to save lives. House Republicans refused to join us in moving this Nation forward. The stem cell vote yesterday is the latest example of why new leadership is needed to take our country in a new direction.

CREDIT CARD ABUSE AT HOMELAND SECURITY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the GAO recently reported that 9,000 credit card holders at the Department of Homeland Security used their official cards for more than $420 million worth of goods and services last year, making it the top purchasing agency in the Federal Government.

The purchases were made using government credit cards with a congressionally approved spending limit of $250,000 that the GAO said resulted in numerous cases of fraud and abuse of taxpayers' dollars.

Nearly half the purchases were made without prior written authorization, and 63 percent did not have evidence that the goods or services were actually received, the report said. How terrible and outrageous this abuse is. Surely the spending limit is too high.

It is very important that this agency enforce adequate internal controls to ensure that card holders are responsibly using their cards. I call upon the homeland security officials to stop this abuse.

REPUBLICANS CHANGE TUNE ON IRAQ

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, just 6 weeks ago, Zarqawi was killed in Iraq. Five weeks ago, the House held a debate on Iraq in which Republicans belittled Democrats for questioning the President's strategy.

Said my colleague from North Carolina: ''There are those who want to deny that we are making progress in Iraq.''

But no matter how hard my Republican colleagues try, they cannot escape the facts on the ground. After the most violent month in Iraq and a U.N. report estimating that more than 100 Iraqis are being killed per day, the Republicans are singing a different tune.

This morning's Washington Post reads: ''GOP Lawmakers Edge Away from Optimism on Iraq.'' And that same North Carolina lawmaker is quoted as saying: ''We can't look like we won't face reality.''

Well, here's reality: when the President went to war with too few troops, not enough body armor, and not enough armed Humvees, and without a plan for occupation, the Republican Congress failed their oversight responsibilities.

Lieutenant General Greg Newbold said, ''To be sure, the Bush administration and senior military officials are not alone in their culpability.'' Members of Congress defaulted in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility of oversight.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change. It is time for a new direction.

NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, we are seeing it on the front page of Roll Call today, talking about the security message, where the leadership in this House has been focused for a long time now.

We know that national security is securing this country, making an aggressive move in the war on terror, being sure that we support our troops, making sure that we have a Nation that is safe, where we can live, where we can work, go to school, go to our businesses, have secure communities and be secure in our American hopes and dreams.

We also know that a key component of this national security agenda is border security, and I commend the House leadership for staying focused on securing the border first.

It is an imperative for us, Mr. Speaker. We have to stop illegal entry into this country. Illegal entry has turned every State into a border State, every town into a border town, and the people of this Nation know that it will not change until we secure our border.

RAMAPO AMONG BEST PLACES TO LIVE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that Money Magazine has just named the town of Ramapo, in Rockland County in my district, as one of the 100 best places to live in the United States, ranking Ramapo as 49.

I congratulate Ramapo and its town supervisor, Christopher St. Lawrence, who has done a wonderful job in leading that town. Ramapo, with a population of 110,000 residents, is the largest town in Rockland County, with a third of Rockland's inhabitants. It combines such densely populated places as Spring Valley, Muncie, New Square with the country settings of Chestnut Ridge, Suffern, and Wesley Hills.

Half of Ramapo is designated park land. Businesses have invested more than $1 billion in the past 4 years. The town has the highest bond rating in the country. A new state-of-the-art cardiac care unit has opened at Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern. They have great schools, and $125 million has been invested in a water treatment plant.

Three years ago, Money Magazine named Ramapo as the second best place to live in the Northeast. This year the ranking was done on a nationwide basis.

I am proud to represent Rockland and Ramapo in the U.S. Congress, and I congratulate the people of Ramapo on achieving this great honor.

THE WAYWARD REID-KENNEDY SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, some have asked why the House will be holding hearings around our country about illegal immigration. Well, the concise reason is the out-of-touch Reid-Kennedy Senate bill.

The Senate passed legislation that clearly flies in the face of common sense. The American people don't want amnesty. The Reid-Kennedy Bill includes it. The American people don't want to provide Social Security benefits to illegal aliens. The Reid-Kennedy bill includes it.

The Senate voted to give illegals things that American citizens, legal American citizens, don't get, like instate college tuition for all.

This makes no sense. It is unacceptable and it is unbelievable and it is just plain wrong.

The American people are fed up with this reckless attitude and poor policy. Acceptance of the Senate plan is something for which the House will not stand; and once the American people know about it, through our hearings, they won't stand for it either. Then the American people will speak with such passion and vehemence and clarity that the House and Senate may act together and do the right thing first, control our borders and enforce current law.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS DISTRACT AND DIVIDE

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that out of the 201 days this year this House has only been in session for 63. We are on track for this House to meet even less than the notorious ''Do Nothing Congress'' that Missouri's Harry Truman ran against in 1948.

But now the House Republican leadership has dedicated themselves to a distract and divide agenda, even while we face growing challenges at home and crisis abroad.

This week their agenda called for supporting President Bush's veto of the landmark stem cell bill that would move us closer to lifesaving cures for diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and cancer. Majority Republicans are cutting off hope for millions of Americans, all so they can satisfy their base on the far right. Do they really want to keep research from finding cures to these diseases so we can save millions of lives? Their agenda is not our agenda.

With only one week left before the August recess, House Republicans

refuse to address the issues that are of real concern to American people. It is time we take America in a new direction.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, President Bush issued the first veto of his Presidency yesterday, and it was the right thing to do.

By sustaining that veto last night, after more than a year of rhetoric, much of it misleading, we have come down on the side of protecting human life. And we have saved the American taxpayer from being forced to fund unethical and unsuccessful research involving the destruction of human embryos.

Though a chapter in this debate has now been closed, this issue is not going away. As we move forward, I hope we will keep in mind what we have learned. The choice doesn't have to be between doing stem cell research and not doing stem cell research. There are ethical, life-affirming methods of doing this research that are producing successful treatments today using adult stem cells.

Let's move forward with stem cell research, Mr. Speaker, but let's do it in an ethical way.

□ 1030

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5684, UNITED STATES-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 925 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 925

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5684) to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement. The bill shall be considered as read. The bill shall be debatable for two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. Pursuant to section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 5684 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker in consonance with section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 925 is a closed rule providing for 2 hours of debate in the House, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. It also provides that pursuant to section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion.

Lastly, the resolution provides that during consideration of the bill, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker in consonance with section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 925 provides for the consideration of H.R. 5684, a bill to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, in accordance with trade measures negotiated under the Trade Promotion Authority. Under these procedures, once the administration formally submits the final legislative language to Congress, it may not be amended.

Former United States Trade Rep Rob Portman signed the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement on January 19, 2006. Under the agreement, all consumer and industrial goods traded between the U.S. and Oman will immediately be duty free, and 87 percent of the U.S. agriculture tariff lines will gain immediate duty-free access with the remaining tariffs phased out over a 10-year period. It provides wide access and sets a strong precedent for opening up opportunities for services for U.S. firms, contains robust protections for U.S. intellectual property rights holders, and includes strong labor and environmental provisions.

Oman enacted broad labor reforms in 2003, Mr. Speaker, and has followed up with specific commitments to ensure that its laws provide strong protections for workers consistent with international standards. Oman enacted many of these reforms earlier this month and has pledged to enact the remaining reforms by this November. This agreement makes it clear that it is inappropriate for Oman to weaken or reduce domestic labor protections or environmental laws to encourage trade or investment and that this obligation is enforceable through specific dispute settlement procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the United States makes up only 4 percent of the world's population. Therefore, we must recognize that we have an opportunity to create and expand the marketplace for U.S. goods and services by reaching fair trade agreements with our international trading partners. This agreement will contribute to economic growth and trade between the U.S. and Oman; generate export opportunities for U.S. companies, farmers, and ranchers; help create jobs in both countries; and help American consumers save money while offering them greater choices.

My home State of Washington, for example, is one of the most trade-dependent States in the Nation, and our economy depends on fair trade. From agriculture to high tech to manufacturing industries, Washington State and our Nation are in a position to benefit by having more trading partners.

One area where trade with Oman shows great promise for America is in the area of commercial aircraft. Oman Air recently purchased Boeing 737 airplanes valued at $200 million at catalog prices. We want to continue to encourage these kinds of sales to Oman and in the broader Middle East, which, of course, creates new jobs here at home.

In addition to the new commercial opportunities it provides, this agreement will support many of the recent government, legal, and economic reforms in Oman, which are important to bringing stability to the Middle East region. In 2003 President Bush proposed completion of a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013 as part of a plan to fight terrorism by supporting Middle East economic growth and democracy through trade.

The United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act would be the fifth bilateral trade agreement reached between the United States and a Middle Eastern country. It is yet another step in the right direction toward integrating fair trade policies and economic reforms to support a more stable and prosperous Middle East. This agreement will send a strong signal to countries in that region about the benefits of closer economic and political ties to the United States.

The Committee on Ways and Means favorably reported H.R. 5684 last May. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 925 and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me this time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today we debate another free trade agreement. We all know well-crafted trade policy is capable of spreading benefits to a broad portion of the population while promoting innovation and solidifying partnerships between and among nations.

As a leader in the global economy, the United States has the ability and

the responsibility to use trade agreements to effect positive change here at home and abroad. Unfortunately, the Oman Free Trade Agreement, which we are considering, continues the recent trend toward divisive partnership on trade.

Because of the majority's approach on trade policy, you have a lot of Democrats, who I believe are inclined to vote for free trade agreements, voting against this pact. I am disappointed the administration and the Republican leadership have missed another opportunity to return to a bipartisan consensus on trade. The majority once again cut Democrats out of the negotiations and produced another free trade agreement that fails to protect the basic rights of workers.

Like the Central American Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA, which I voted against a year ago, the labor provisions of the Oman Free Trade Agreement only require Oman to enforce its own labor laws. At this time Oman's laws do not come close to meeting International Labor Organization standards. This is a threshold that Ways and Means Democrats have set for labor provisions in trade agreements, and it is quite reasonable. The United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement does not meet it.

Of utmost concern, Oman's laws do not guarantee the freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. It does not even prohibit human trafficking and forced labor.

In Oman today unions do not exist. There are only labor management committees where management holds over 70 percent of the leadership positions. In no way is this even close to representation the workers here have achieved after decades of struggle.

Ways and Means Committee Democrats tried to work with the Government of Oman to revise its labor laws, and they were very clear about what steps needed to be taken: Specifically, make sure Oman's laws conform to basic labor standards and begin to implement existing laws in a manner that complies with the principles established by the International Labor Organization. These are not radical requests. Yet the majority and Oman have not acceded to them.

Just yesterday Representative CARDIN offered a reasonable amendment that would have delayed implementation of this agreement until Oman came into compliance with these standards. That amendment was rejected. The Omani Government attempted to pacify our labor concerns with an 11th-hour royal decree. Unfortunately, it fully addressed only one of the 10 deficiencies outlined by Ways and Means Democrats. So this is not a valid argument.

The situation I just described is quite a contrast to the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Bahrain made commitments to modify its laws to adhere to International Labor Organization standards and took steps to make sure those standards were being adhered to on the ground immediately. Oman has taken no such actions. As a result, the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement fails workers in Oman and here in the United States.

This sends a message to the world that the United States does not respect the hardworking men and women that fuel the global economy. That is extraordinarily unwise, particularly considering the challenges we are facing all around the globe today.

I had hoped that the bipartisan opposition to CAFTA might make it clear to the Bush administration that a broad cross-section of this House would not accept trade agreements which fail to ensure fundamental rights for workers. That is apparently not the case because this agreement is another step backwards for workers. Further, it demonstrates this administration's refusal to use trade to better the lives of the broad portion of working families, not a select few.

And yesterday at the Rules Committee, Representative CARDIN highlighted a potentially serious concern about port security. The provision imposes a burdensome process should the United States Government choose to protect its citizens from potentially dangerous foreign control over United States port operations. Representative CARDIN offered a second amendment yesterday in the Rules Committee that would have addressed this concern. However, like his other commonsense amendment on labor provisions, it was rejected. This scenario is another reason Members should reject this agreement as currently written.

I know these amendments would interrupt the fast-track process. However, I believe the issues raised by Mr. CARDIN's amendments warrant rejecting this agreement as currently written. By doing so, we can put together a framework that addresses these very serious concerns on port security and workers' rights.

Congress needs to push the administration to step back and rethink its trade policy. The United States cannot afford to abandon its role as a leader in the global economy nor can we abandon our duty to working families both here and abroad.

We need to embrace the benefits of trade while still respecting the fundamental rights of workers. I sincerely hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will work together to achieve such a balance in considering future trade policy.

When we debated CAFTA, I said, ''If we do not get CAFTA right, we risk undercutting support for all future trade agreements.'' Well, we did not get CAFTA right, and now we are doing it again on Oman. The majority is just digging us all into a deeper hole, making it that much more difficult to establish the trust required for balanced trade negotiations.

I hope the scrutiny that this relatively small free trade agreement is receiving leads the majority to reconsider its approach. I hope it makes them ask: Is it worth rushing this agreement to passage with inadequate assurances on labor protections when we might be able to achieve them in a number of weeks? Is it really worth cutting the minority out of the negotiations?

In my opinion, the answers to these questions are obvious. Partisanship tears this House apart every week we are in session. Look at the tone of the debate on the floor this week. It is time for a new direction; and trade, because it is such a critical issue, would be an ideal place to start.

I continue to have hope that we can regain the spirit of cooperation on trade that has served this House so well in the past. It is a goal that is within reach. I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to commit to achieving it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will respond to a couple of points that my friend from California made. Regarding the labor language in this trade agreement, it is essentially the same language that was in the Bahrain trade agreement that, of course, is in the same part geographically in the world as Oman.

□ 1045

I would just remind my colleagues that that language and that trade agreement were acceptable to my friend from California. She voted in favor of the Bahrain trade agreement, as did the gentleman from Maryland, whom she referenced.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to respond to the concerns that this agreement poses national security issues and concerns that a third-party tribunal would have ultimate say over our security issues.

The U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, like previous trade agreements, treats Omani landside service providers and investors no less favorably than our own landside service suppliers. These landside activities include unloading vessels, marine cargo handling, and ship cleaning.

When an entity participates in these landside aspects of port activities, it does not control, manage or operate a U.S. port. That always remains the responsibility of the port authority.

Nothing in this agreement, Mr. Speaker, before us today prohibits the U.S. from reviewing foreign investment transactions in order to ensure our national security. More importantly, it expressly permits the U.S. to block a potential port acquisition by claiming national security interests.

As you see, Mr. Speaker, all of our trade agreements, including this one, contain an article called ''essential security,'' which is self-judging, meaning that it is up to an individual country

to determine whether a particular matter is necessary for the protection of its essential security interests. All the commitments that we undertake in trade agreements are subject to this provision.

Under this article, nothing in an agreement can prevent us from applying measures that we consider necessary for the protection of our essential security interests. Therefore, the ultimate decision on what is necessary to protect our essential services rests with the United States, not a third-party tribunal.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, history and precedent also indicate that no third-party dispute panel or tribunal has ever heard any arguments, much less issued a decision, related to the scope and application of any national security exception contained in a national trade or investment agreement.

So those issues, while they may be nice to talk about, really have no bearing on the trade agreements that we have had in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN).

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed today that we are about to consider a free trade agreement with Oman that I would have hoped we would have worked out so we could have had strong bipartisan support. Unfortunately, the agreement comes up short on international labor standards, and I believe we could have achieved those international labor standards to make sure that Oman complies with ILO standards. But, unfortunately, there was an unwillingness on the part of the negotiators to complete the agreement in a way that could have gotten more support.

The second issue that I take, particularly with this rule, because I am going to support the gentlewoman's position of opposing the previous question, is to deal with a very sensitive issue of port security. So let me try to explain the port security issue, because I think there have been some misstatements on the floor of the House.

This agreement permits Oman to operate landside aspects of port activities, including operation and maintenance of docks, loading and unloading of vessels directly to and from land, marine cargo handling, operation and maintenance of piers, ship cleaning, stevedoring, transfer of cargo between vessels and trucks, trains, pipelines and wharves and waterfront terminal operations.

That is exactly what Dubai Ports World tried to do in ports in this country, including my own Port of Baltimore. We spoke up and the American people spoke up against allowing a foreign company to operate port facilities here in the United States, and we blocked that transaction. It was the right thing to do for the security of America and the security of our ports.

Under this agreement, if Dubai Ports World had an operation within Oman, they would be permitted to apply to do those same operations here in the United States and they would be permitted to do that under the free trade agreement.

I have heard my colleagues suggest that we can just invoke the essential security exception to an agreement, and you are correct, we can invoke the essential security exception and block the transaction. But then we are subject to dispute settlement procedures. We never give up our sovereignty in trade agreements, but we changed our tax laws because of international pressure when we thought we didn't have to, because otherwise we would have been subjected to tariffs against U.S. products. The same thing is true here. If the dispute panel rules against us, then we are subjecting ourselves to sanctions.

Our USTR says this is absolute, they can't do that. But let me remind you, we have lost 83 percent of our cases in dispute settlement procedures where sanctions have been imposed against our country. So we haven't been that successful in these international tribunals.

Let me also point out that by including this language in this bill, there will be continued pressure on this administration to allow foreign government companies to operate ports here in the United States. We have an administration that is friendly towards that.

We have the responsibility in Congress to protect our ports and protect our Nation. It is our responsibility. I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question so that we can protect the ports here in America and make it clear, by simply taking out that one provision that would allow the operation of port facilities potentially by companies owned by countries that are not friendly to the United States.

This is an important issue, and I urge all my colleagues to pay attention to this. This is our vote and our opportunity, and I urge the defeat of the previous question.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

I rise in strong support of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. Following the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement last year, Mr. Speaker, the U.S.-Oman FTA sends a clear message that we are committed to improving our relationship with the Middle East while improving our international trade interests.

The agreement goes beyond addressing trade issues. As part of the FTA, Oman commits to intensifying its political reform efforts to enhance participation of all of its citizens in the process. Oman has also implemented economic changes that will make entry into its domestic and international markets more accessible to private citizens.

Additionally, the FTA has stipulations that Oman complete labor reforms by October 31 of this year. However, of its own volition, Oman began enacting these reforms beginning in 2003, and earlier this month many of the remaining reforms were implemented by a royal decree. Some of the recent changes include dispute settlement procedures for labor representatives, the ability to call for strikes, and strengthening of legal protections for women and foreign workers. Oman has ratified the International Labor Organization conventions against child and forced labor.

Not only has Oman undertaken domestic reforms, but it has also made strides to change its international policy by pulling out of the Arab League boycott of Israel and repealing all aspects of the boycott. This shows a clear commitment to Oman's desire to function in accordance with international trade norms of equality and full market access.

The 9/11 Commission report states that economic reforms will be the key to changing the cultural landscape in the Middle East. As such, this FTA is about much more than trade; it is a tool for advancing U.S. strategic interests. Oman is a key ally in the global war on terror and has provided critical assistance to our Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In short, this U.S.-Oman FTA will help to improve our market access and increase national security; and, therefore, I would like to reiterate my strong support for this mutually beneficial agreement.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ).

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question. This would allow us to consider the Cardin amendment to close the loophole in the agreement that would allow a foreign company based in Oman to operate U.S. port facilities.

Earlier on I was opposed to the Oman Free Trade Agreement because it undermines fundamental workers' rights. This free trade agreement is another blow to working families, exporting more of our jobs overseas. But I was shocked to learn that it could underpin the basic safety and security of those who I was sent here to represent.

I come from a community that is directly tied to this Nation's largest port, the Port of Long Beach. The safety and security of this port and all other American ports are essential to our country.

The Oman FTA directly threatens our ability to control our Nation's ports. The creators of this deal completely ignored Congress' overwhelming response to the Dubai Ports

World deal because, just like that deal, the Oman FTA has a very far-reaching provision hidden completely from the public eye.

Buried deep in the annex of this agreement, our country's right to determine who operates our ports of entry is given away. Who gets the new right to control vital American infrastructure? Any group of people or government that incorporates to do business in Oman.

The same people who supported the Dubai Ports World deal are now telling us that this is, again, nothing to worry about. They were wrong then, and they are wrong now. We should not export the safety and security of Americans. I urge again my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY).

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support today of the Oman Free Trade Agreement. It is an important outreach and step that this country ought to be making and I think we will make.

I would like to comment just briefly on a couple of the previous speakers. They appear to be relying on stock certificates to protect our ports. The truth of the matter is, I agree with them wholeheartedly that protecting our ports is in the vital interests of this country. No one would argue about that.

But simply the fact who owns a particular company is scant comfort when it comes to control of the ports, as well as the security surrounding all of the ports. All the conduct that goes on, the goods and services are moved through there. The scheduling and the actual control of our security by the Coast Guard, to me is a much better way to secure our ports than simply worrying about the stock certificates of the companies that provide the services of scheduling, loading and unloading.

The United States free trade agreement with Oman represents more than just simple economics and trade. Support for this agreement represents building a relationship and strengthening with a peaceful ally in the Middle East that has a proven track record.

Let me run through a couple of things that I think are important when we talk about who is Oman and why should we enter into some sort of bilateral free trade agreement with Oman.

Oman has been a proven leader in the Persian Gulf in establishing trade and other ties with Israel. Since 1970, Oman has pursued a moderate foreign policy and expanded its diplomatic relationships dramatically.

Oman has also worked to develop close ties with its neighbors in the Middle East. Oman joined the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council when it was established and traditionally supports Middle East peace initiatives.

In 1979, Oman supported the Camp David Accords and was one of only three Arab League states which did not break relationships with Egypt after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979.

In April of 1994, Oman hosted the plenary meeting of the Water Working Group of the peace process and was the first gulf state to do so.

On December 26, 1994, Oman became the first gulf state to host an Israeli Prime Minister, again trying to build on a relationship of peace with another important ally of ours in the Middle East.

Oman has eliminated all aspects of the Arab boycott of Israel. In 2005 and 2006, senior Omani officials issued letters affirming that Oman has no boycott in place against Israel. Oman was one of the first regional states to offer recognition to the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council in 2003 and backed the Iraqi elections that took place in January 2005.

This agreement with Oman illustrates the importance of trade liberalization and security cooperation, both of which further our national interests from an economic and security standpoint. We must not turn our backs on the peace-promoting leader in this region. Oman is dependable, and it is critical that we continue to build on this relationship.

□ 1100

Please join me in supporting the previous question on the rule and in support of the Oman Free Trade Agreement that will be brought to the floor later today.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this agreement. Unfettered free trade is one of the major reasons why in our country today the middle class is shrinking; why for 5 straight years family median income has declined, while in the last 5 years 5 million more Americans have slipped into poverty; why millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages.

Yes, I acknowledge at a time when the CEOs of large corporations earn 400 times what their workers are making, at a time when large corporations are throwing American workers out on the street and moving to low-wage countries, yes, free trade has worked very, very well for the large multinationals.

But maybe, just maybe, once in a long while, the Republican leadership might want to consider the middle class of this country, working families, lower-income people and not just the wealthiest people.

Mr. Speaker, the American middle class should no longer be forced to compete against workers in China, Vietnam, and other countries where desperate people, through no fault of their own, are forced in some cases to work for wages as low as 30 cents an hour. That is not a level playing field.

Throwing American workers out on the street, moving to countries where people are paid pennies an hour, is bad public policy. It has failed. One of the definitions of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again. That is what this Congress does. It fails every single time.

Mr. Speaker, before we vote for unfettered free trade with Oman, we should consider this. In Oman, the minimum wage ranges from absolutely zero to $1.30 an hour. The average wage in Oman is about $13,200, below the poverty line for a single mother with one child living in this country.

Is that fair competition for American workers? In addition, Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot from this administration and my Republican colleagues about the need to support freedom. Well, are the people in Oman free to elect their leader? What was the result in the last election? We didn't hear much about that, because they don't have elections.

Oman is a hereditary monarchy. Is there freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press in Oman? No, there is not. Mr. Speaker, in the last 5 years alone, we have lost nearly 3 million decent paying manufacturing jobs, 17 percent of our total. In 1993, before NAFTA, our trade deficit was over $70 billion. Last year, after unfettered free trade, it was over $715 billion. This year it is expected to top $800 billion.

The time is now to rethink our policy with regard to unfettered free trade.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as a union member and as a Member of this body, and as someone who wants to expand U.S. trade relations, nonetheless I feel obligated to oppose this rule and the Oman Free Trade Agreement we will consider today.

The Bush administration and congressional Republicans are again trying to force passage of a trade agreement that willfully undermines labor rights in Oman and economic and homeland security for hardworking Americans in this country.

Democrats have called for such standards in every agreement negotiated by this administration, and each time we have been let down by the President and his allies here in Congress. In sending the Oman trade agreement to the Hill, the Bush administration has also astonishingly opted to send Congress an agreement in which he refused to include a prohibition on forced or slave labor.

Is this how we spread democracy in the Middle East? Is this how the U.S. best improves the lives in the Middle East and advances our own security interests? Another bizarre decision the President made is to put in jeopardy

the security of our ports and other critical landside homeland security functions. This Oman agreement explicitly paves the way for companies like Dubai Ports World to gain control of our ports.

Those who disagree with this argument refuse to acknowledge that the fact that in the best-case scenario, with the President utilizing every national security waiver at his disposal, the final decision on such a matter will be left out of U.S. hands and left to an international tribunal.

I would think the Republican leadership could at least agree that we should not outsource our core homeland security functions and decisions. In a country like Oman, where meager rights for workers fall well below the International Labor Organization's standards, where the Sultan can change any law by decree, and where there are no independent unions, Congress should be especially vigilant.

Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that any trade agreement with Oman, or any country, contains hard and fast labor standards. The Oman FTA does not. This is a loser on homeland security, for job security and for the best interests of Omanis. It should be defeated.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my very good friend from the Rules Committee for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Ms. MATSUI's leadership. Mr. Speaker, this legislation needs to pass. This trade agreement is very much in the interests of the United States. Oman is our ally. It is an example of exactly what we need to help bring about throughout the Arab world.

Now, I do not know if everyone in this body knows where Oman is located. It sits at the Strait of Hormuz and at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. It is in a critically strategic location. Across that strait lies Iran. More than 20 percent of the world's oil supply passes through that strait.

Oman has remained our ally, notwithstanding all of the pressure that it has received over generations. It has been our ally since 1833 when we passed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce. It was the first Arab country to send an Ambassador to the United States. Today it is the first and only Arab country to have a female Ambassador to the United States.

It is one of the most open, liberal societies in the Arab and Muslim world. They signed a 10-year military access agreement in 1981 with the United States, and they have renewed it twice. They continue to be one of the most important logistical and operational support areas for the present war in Iraq, and were so in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what more they can do. They are an active supporter of the United States against terrorism, and as this letter from AIPAC says, they have been willing to take on the Arab world and break the Arab boycott against Israel, the primary, secondary and tertiary boycott. And here we are, we debated all night last night about the resolution in the Middle East.

We know the number of lives that are being lost, the conflagration that is taking place, and we will not reach out to an Arab nation that is our most important ally, that is exactly what we are hoping to achieve in terms of economic and social liberalization.

They have agreed to comply with all of the International Labor Organization's standards. They will have collective bargaining, unionization. They are going to open up their industries to outside review and competition. And what do they want to buy? They want to buy transport equipment and manufactured products, products that generate jobs in the United States.

And what are they going to sell to us? It is primarily oil that does not generate jobs in the Arab world. That is part of the problem. But the Sultan of Oman understands that the vast majority, more than 60 percent of his population, are under the age of 18. He gets it. He understands. He needs to move into the modern world. But he needs American support to do that.

This trade treaty needs to pass.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee, who is probably one of the individuals in this body that works on trade issues more than anybody else.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. I will correct him by saying that I take a back seat to the Speaker pro tem, Mr. KOLBE, who unfortunately is going to be leaving at the end of this Congress. I have been very pleased to work with him on a wide range of issues dealing with trade globally, and appreciate his stellar service.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I want to associate myself, my remarks, with my Democratic colleague, Mr. MORAN, underscoring the fact that this is a very important bipartisan issue. We as Republicans within the Republican leadership, are reaching out to Democrats who share our vision of pursuing our very, very important goal of free trade overall and this very important agreement with Oman.

Now, my colleague from Vermont was speaking earlier about the fact that unfettered free trade has, in fact, jeopardized the livelihood of Americans, it has helped the very rich and hurt the middle class. Nothing could be further from the truth.

One has to look at the overall policies of the United States of America and look at the economic policies pursued by this administration and this Congress. We have to realize the fact that we have minority home ownership at an all-time high. We have unemployment at a 4.6 percent rate.

The first quarter of this year, we saw gross domestic product growth at 5.6 percent. We have seen inflation, based on the projections outlined by the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Bernanke, yesterday, tempering.

We are seeing predictions for strong economic growth. And, Mr. Speaker, it is due in large part to our pursuit of breaking down barriers to expand the opportunity for greater trade and for job creation right here in the United States of America.

Now, this agreement that we are going to be facing today, which I am very pleased will enjoy bipartisan support, as I said, is an agreement that I believe really transcends the simple economic questions that we face today, the economic questions of important job creation in the United States.

But the vote that we face today is a very important geopolitical question. Now, my friend from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) talked about the strategic importance of Oman. My friend from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) earlier talked about the fact that Oman was the first gulf nation to host an Israeli Prime Minister.

We have talked about the fact that over the past many decades, we have seen a very important relationship that has existed between Oman and the United States of America. And one of the things that is important to note is that we, with huge bipartisan numbers, put into place the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement is by every account an even stronger, better agreement from the perspective of worker rights and the other issues that are raised by so many, better than the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement.

Now, as I talk about the geopolitical issue, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to note that one of the things that we as an institution are doing on a regular basis is encouraging the building of democratic institutions around the world, political pluralism, the rule of law, self-determination.

And, frankly, we have as an institution been, I think, doing a great job in helping emerging and reemerging democracies. A year ago this spring, Speaker HASTERT and Minority Leader PELOSI put into place a great new commission, which I am privileged to chair, and our colleague from North Carolina, DAVID PRICE, serves as the ranking minority member on. It is a bipartisan, 16-member commission.

The Speaker pro tem is a member of our commission. And what we have done is we have said we need to take new and reemerging democracies around the world and help them build their parliaments.

□ 1115

Now, as we look at the geopolitical importance of this issue, Mr. Speaker,

I have to tell you that we just, 2 weeks ago, had our commission in Lebanon, and we just, days before the attack by Hezbollah against the Israelis, the kidnapping of the IDF troops, military, we were on the tarmac in Beirut, having just come from meetings with the Lebanese Parliament. There are parliamentarians in Lebanon and many other parts of the world who are hoping very much to be able to build those parliaments, to establish their libraries, to put into place a committee structure that will allow for adequate oversight of the executive branch, and to do many of the things that we have a tendency to take for granted around here.

Now, we know that Oman isn't an American-style democracy; we recognize that. A lot of people have been critical because of it. But the fact of the matter is, we need to do all that we can to help those countries that are moving towards the rule of law, and Oman is clearly one of them, living with a rules-based trading system, and other countries in the region that are seeking to stand up in this global war against Islamofascism to do all possible to help us.

Mr. Speaker, economic liberalization is a very important part of that goal. I can't think of a more important vote after, as Mr. MORAN said, the debate we had last night on the resolution that we are going to be voting on before too terribly long, supporting the State of Israel and their action and their right to defend themselves. And now this agreement really goes hand in hand with our quest to take on those who want to do in our way of life, who want to undermine opportunities for freedom.

This is a very good agreement. It is a good rule that, under the standard structure that we have, allows for its implementation. So Members should vote ''yes'' on the previous question when that vote comes forward, and they should vote ''yes'' for the rule and ''yes'' on final passage for the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding me this time and wish to say to my colleague from California who just left the podium that one of America's problems in the Middle East is that we have become too identified with the superrich, undemocratic leaders of those countries who ignore the teeming masses of the poor among them. That is where ''the resistance'' comes from.

Mr. DREIER. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. KAPTUR. As I finish my statement, I will yield some time to the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, today the House will consider another so-called free trade agreement, this time with Oman, a nation that is not a democracy. In fact, far from it. It is a sultanate with rule by the superrich. This agreement will yield no more liberty.

We should defeat the resolution and this bill. Oman is not a free country. Free trade should only exist among free people. Trade should enhance liberty and freedom, not undermine it by enshrining gross privilege.

Exploitation of Oman's working class by its own rulers, along with imported labor from poorer countries who have no rights, underpin the ugly underbelly of Oman, no matter how the gold on their palaces glitters.

Free trade should benefit America and America's workers, so name me a free trade agreement that has done that? The gentleman and I were here for the passage of the horrible NAFTA agreement—he voted yes, I voted no. It has put hundreds of thousands of our people in this country out of work, and it has hurt millions more people in Mexico.

NAFTA has yielded trade deficits with Mexico when we used to have surpluses. Trade deals with Canada, Vietnam, and China have not helped America. Free trade deals help a narrow band of invesors this gentleman is more than happy to help.

''Free trade'' cannot anchor America's democratic principles. Indeed, trade with an undemocratic society ultimately crushes liberty's cause.

Constitutions dedicated to liberties and rights and justice must come first. Is America so bankrupt and desperate for a landing pad in the Middle East that we cede more of our fundamental values of liberty globally with yet another repressive society?

Free societies exist because people of those nations believed in liberty first. America's trade policy should embody our enduring values of liberty, not enshrine pecuniary relationships without principle.

Oman should first take their place at freedom's table, and then let us talk about free trade.

I ask my colleagues to defeat the rule and to defeat the resolution on free trade with Oman. It is not a free country, and it is time America identified with those in the world who aspire for freedom themselves, not just the superrich.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER).

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding. Let me begin by saying I have the utmost respect for my friend from Ohio. I greatly revere her passionate commitment to her goal.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we share the same goals. Those goals are to improve the quality of life for the middle class and those struggling working Americans here in the United States of America and in other parts of the world. I think that we just have a slightly different view.

You know, the gentlewoman pointed her finger at me and began engaging in very, very strong language about the North American Free Trade Agreement. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I believe that the North American Free Trade Agreement has been an overwhelming success. Today we enjoy a third of a trillion dollars, with a capital T, in crossborder trade between Mexico and the United States.

As President Bill Clinton said when he was eulogizing Lloyd Bentsen, the former Treasury Secretary and Senator from Texas, he said, were it not for the North American Free Trade Agreement, this very serious problem that we have of illegal immigration would be much, much worse today than it is.

Now, if one realizes that in Mexico we have a burgeoning middle class, a middle class that is today larger than the entire Canadian population, and it is continuing to grow, those areas that have benefited most greatly from the North American Free Trade Agreement in the northern states of Mexico have seen tremendous booms in their standard of living.

Ms. KAPTUR. Would the gentleman be happy to yield me a couple of seconds on his time?

Mr. DREIER. I am happy to yield to my friend.

MS. KAPTUR. You know, it is amazing how two people can live in this world and view it so differently. The exploitation of Mexico's rural countryside is a continental sacrilege. The reason we have all this illegal immigration to our country is NAFTA wiped out the struggling poor of Mexico's countryside. Does the gentleman have no conscience for them?

Mr. DREIER. If I could reclaim my time, Mr. Speaker. May I reclaim my time?

Ms. KAPTUR. What about our workers? Millions lost jobs because of NAFTA.

Mr. DREIER. Could I reclaim my time, Mr. Speaker? Am I in control of my time?

She is claiming that I am somehow exploiting the underclass of Mexico.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 additional minute to the gentleman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The gentleman is recognized for 1 additional minute.

Mr. DREIER. I would say to my friend, obviously we want to do everything that we can to see the standard of living and quality of life for that underclass that she refers to, as she leaves the floor, as I am trying to engage in this colloquy with her.

I will say that I believe that our policies have played a big role in enhancing the standard of living and quality of life, and I am not going to be satisfied until every single one of those individuals does, in fact, see their quality of life improve.

I believe in that economic liberalization and creating economic opportunity, which we have done for so much of Mexico, through the existence of the——

Ms. KAPTUR. Would you be kind enough to yield?

Mr. DREIER. I am happy to yield.

Ms. KAPTUR. I will just say to the gentleman that post-NAFTA, the wages of Mexicans were cut in half. Two million people are streaming across this continent because their way of life has been destroyed. Travel with me to meet these people. In our Nation, the middle class has lost a million jobs to Mexico. Why is it the gentleman refuses to see this continental tragedy.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, that is just plain wrong. That is just plain inaccurate. If you look at, again, the standard of living and quality of life in Mexico, it is substantially greater today than it was before the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Ms. KAPTUR. Not for the ordinary people.

Mr. DREIER. I believe that these policies are very important for the United States and the world.

Ms. KAPTUR. Only for those at the top.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to vote ''no'' on the previous question. If the previous question is defeated, I will amend the rule to make in order a critical amendment that was offered in the Rules Committee yesterday by Trade Subcommittee Ranking Member CARDIN, but unfortunately was rejected by a straight party-line vote.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to print the text of the amendment and extraneous materials immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. MATSUI. The Cardin amendment would close a dangerous loophole in the current agreement, a loophole that could jeopardize our Nation's port security. In other words, in its present form, this agreement would allow a foreign company based in Oman to operate U.S. port facilities. The Cardin amendment provides that the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement cannot take effect until the U.S. withdraws its commitment to allow Omani companies to operate landside aspects of U.S. port activities.

Unless we vote on the Cardin amendment today, we could once again be faced with a risk that the management of our vital ports might again be handed over to a foreign entity.

The House must have the chance to weigh in on this matter of national security. It is time for this House to stop giving rubber-stamp approval to this administration at the expense of our national security. The Cardin amendment is the only way to ensure that this free trade agreement doesn't compromise our ports.

Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues may argue that the adoption of this important amendment will shut off the fast-track process in the Senate for this bill. True, perhaps, but we should not allow any process to trump our national security and the duty of this Congress to protect its citizens from harm.

If we have to send this agreement back to the drawing board, so be it. However Members of this House feel about this trade deal, I would hope that they would all realize the danger of leaving this loophole in place. Vote ''no'' on the previous question so we can protect our ports.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, if the issue is on port security, then I would like to remind my colleagues of what I had said earlier, that in these trade agreements there are articles that speak to essential security, and these articles are self-judging, which means it is up to the individual country to make the determination as to what their security interests are.

There is nothing in this agreement that can prevent us from applying what we consider to be security issues.

But don't take my word for it. The Congressional Research Service, a nonpartisan organization, said, in addressing this issue and having an international tribunal judge this, that national security issues have never been subjected to review by trade panels. That is a very important distinction.

Further, the Congressional Research Service goes on to say: ''The U.S. should appear to be on solid legal grounds for asserting not only that the panel does not, the independent panel, does not have legal authority to determine the validity of such a matter, but also that the inconsistent measure is permitted and justified, given the broad self-judging language in the national security exemption.''

So clearly the argument that the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement will make our Nation less secure, in fact, has no basis in fact. There is no question, however, Mr. Speaker, that fair trade promotes economic development and political cooperation.

In fact, the 9/11 Commission specifically cited Middle Eastern free trade agreements and calls for action on a comprehensive U.S. strategy that President Bush has, I might add, engaged in that includes economic policies encouraging development, more open societies and opportunities for people to improve their lives.

Mr. Speaker, approving this agreement is a vital step towards our efforts against the war on Islamofascism and seeks to make our Nation more, not less, secure.

The material previously referred to by Ms. MATSUI is as follows:

PREVIOUS QUESTION ON H. RES. 925—RULE FOR H.R. 5684, U.S.-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Strike all after the resolved clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5684) to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Notwithstanding section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974 and clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the bill shall be in order except the amendment specified in section 2 of this resolution. The amendment may be offered only by Representative Cardin of Maryland or his designee, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 30 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against the amendment specified in section 2 are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. The amendment referred to in the first section of this resolution is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5684, AS REPORTED OFFERED BY MR. CARDIN OF MARYLAND

At the end of section 101, add the following:

(c) ADDITIONAL CONDITION FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE.—In addition to the provisions of subsection (b), the President may not provide for the Agreement to enter into force with respect to the United States until the United States has included in its reservation relating to the provision of maritime transportation services and the operation of U.S.-flagged vessels, beginning on page 5 of the Schedule of the United States contained in Annex II of the Agreement, measures relating to the following: landside operations of port activities, including operation and maintenance of docks; loading and unloading of vessels directly to or from land; marine cargo handling; operation and maintenance of piers; ship cleaning; stevedoring; transfer of cargo between vessels and trucks, trains, pipelines, and wharves; and waterfront terminal operations.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308–311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13,

1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

Because the vote today may look bad for the Republican majority they will say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution * * * [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule * * * When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 925 will be followed by 5-minute votes on adoption of H. Res. 925, if ordered; and on the motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 921.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 196, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 389]

YEAS—227

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris
Meeks (NY)
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—196

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Case
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Ford
Frank (MA)
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—9

Davis (FL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Evans
Fortenberry
Lewis (GA)
McKinney
Northup
Nussle
Pence

□ 1153

Ms. WATERS changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 237, nays 187, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 390]

YEAS—237

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cramer
Crenshaw
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holt
Hostettler
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris
Meeks (NY)
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Osborne
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schmidt
Schwarz (MI)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—187

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Ford
Frank (MA)
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—8

Buyer
Davis (FL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Evans
Fortenberry
McKinney
Northup
Nussle

□ 1203

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 921.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 921, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 410, nays 8, answered ''present'' 4, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 391]

YEAS—410

Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick

Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—8

Abercrombie
Conyers
Dingell
Kilpatrick (MI)
McDermott
Paul
Rahall
Stark

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—4

Kaptur
Kucinich
Lee
Waters

NOT VOTING—10

Davis (FL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Duncan
Evans
Fortenberry
McKinney
Northup
Nussle
Sanchez, Loretta
Westmoreland

□ 1210

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, July 20, 2006, I was unavoidably detained and thus I missed rollcall votes Nos. 389, 390, and 391. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three votes.

UNITED STATES-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 925, I call up the bill (H.R. 5684) to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5684

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Purposes.
Sec. 3. Definitions.
TITLE I—APPROVAL OF, AND GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO, THE AGREEMENT
Sec. 101. Approval and entry into force of the Agreement.
Sec. 102. Relationship of the Agreement to United States and State law.
Sec. 103. Implementing actions in anticipation of entry into force and initial regulations.
Sec. 104. Consultation and layover provisions for, and effective date of, proclaimed actions.
Sec. 105. Administration of dispute settlement proceedings.
Sec. 106. Arbitration of claims.
Sec. 107. Effective dates; effect of termination.
TITLE II—CUSTOMS PROVISIONS
Sec. 201. Tariff modifications.
Sec. 202. Rules of origin.
Sec. 203. Customs user fees.
Sec. 204. Enforcement relating to trade in textile and apparel goods.
Sec. 205. Reliquidation of entries.
Sec. 206. Regulations.
TITLE III—RELIEF FROM IMPORTS
Sec. 301. Definitions.
Subtitle A—Relief From Imports Benefiting From the Agreement
Sec. 311. Commencing of action for relief.
Sec. 312. Commission action on petition.
Sec. 313. Provision of relief.
Sec. 314. Termination of relief authority.
Sec. 315. Compensation authority.
Sec. 316. Confidential business information.
Subtitle B—Textile and Apparel Safeguard Measures
Sec. 321. Commencement of action for relief.
Sec. 322. Determination and provision of relief.
Sec. 323. Period of relief.
Sec. 324. Articles exempt from relief.
Sec. 325. Rate after termination of import relief.
Sec. 326. Termination of relief authority.
Sec. 327. Compensation authority.
Sec. 328. Confidential business information.
TITLE IV—PROCUREMENT
Sec. 401. Eligible products.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to approve and implement the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Oman entered into under the authority of section 2103(b) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 3803(b));

(2) to strengthen and develop economic relations between the United States and Oman for their mutual benefit;

(3) to establish free trade between the 2 nations through the reduction and elimination of barriers to trade in goods and services and to investment; and

(4) to lay the foundation for further cooperation to expand and enhance the benefits of such Agreement.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AGREEMENT.—The term ''Agreement'' means the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement approved by Congress under section 101(a)(1).

(2) HTS.—The term ''HTS'' means the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

(3) TEXTILE OR APPAREL GOOD.—The term ''textile or apparel good'' means a good listed in the Annex to the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing referred to in section 101(d)(4) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(4)).

TITLE I—APPROVAL OF, AND GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO, THE AGREEMENT

SEC. 101. APPROVAL AND ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT.

(a) APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT AND STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.—Pursuant to section 2105 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 3805) and section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2191), Congress approves—

(1) the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement entered into on January 19, 2006, with Oman and submitted to Congress on June 26, 2006; and

(2) the statement of administrative action proposed to implement the Agreement that was submitted to Congress on June 26, 2006.

(b) CONDITIONS FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT.—At such time as the President determines that Oman has taken measures necessary to bring it into compliance with those provisions of the Agreement that are to take effect on the date on which the Agreement enters into force, the President is authorized to exchange notes with the Government of Oman providing for the entry into force, on or after January 1, 2007, of the Agreement with respect to the United States.

SEC. 102. RELATIONSHIP OF THE AGREEMENT TO UNITED STATES AND STATE LAW.

(a) RELATIONSHIP OF AGREEMENT TO UNITED STATES LAW.—

(1) UNITED STATES LAW TO PREVAIL IN CONFLICT.—No provision of the Agreement, nor the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance, which is inconsistent with any law of the United States shall have effect.

(2) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed—

(A) to amend or modify any law of the United States, or

(B) to limit any authority conferred under any law of the United States,

unless specifically provided for in this Act.

(b) RELATIONSHIP OF AGREEMENT TO STATE LAW.—

(1) LEGAL CHALLENGE.—No State law, or the application thereof, may be declared invalid as to any person or circumstance on the ground that the provision or application is inconsistent with the Agreement, except in an action brought by the United States for the purpose of declaring such law or application invalid.

(2) DEFINITION OF STATE LAW.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''State law'' includes—

(A) any law of a political subdivision of a State; and

(B) any State law regulating or taxing the business of insurance.

(c) EFFECT OF AGREEMENT WITH RESPECT TO PRIVATE REMEDIES.—No person other than the United States—

(1) shall have any cause of action or defense under the Agreement or by virtue of congressional approval thereof; or

(2) may challenge, in any action brought under any provision of law, any action or inaction by any department, agency, or other instrumentality of the United States, any

State, or any political subdivision of a State, on the ground that such action or inaction is inconsistent with the Agreement.

SEC. 103. IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS IN ANTICIPATION OF ENTRY INTO FORCE AND INITIAL REGULATIONS.

(a) IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS.—

(1) PROCLAMATION AUTHORITY.—After the date of the enactment of this Act—

(A) the President may proclaim such actions, and

(B) other appropriate officers of the United States Government may issue such regulations,

as may be necessary to ensure that any provision of this Act, or amendment made by this Act, that takes effect on the date on which the Agreement enters into force is appropriately implemented on such date, but no such proclamation or regulation may have an effective date earlier than the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE OF CERTAIN PROCLAIMED ACTIONS.—Any action proclaimed by the President under the authority of this Act that is not subject to the consultation and layover provisions under section 104 may not take effect before the 15th day after the date on which the text of the proclamation is published in the Federal Register.

(3) WAIVER OF 15-DAY RESTRICTION.—The 15-day restriction in paragraph (2) on the taking effect of proclaimed actions is waived to the extent that the application of such restriction would prevent the taking effect on the date on which the Agreement enters into force of any action proclaimed under this section.

(b) INITIAL REGULATIONS.—Initial regulations necessary or appropriate to carry out the actions required by or authorized under this Act or proposed in the statement of administrative action submitted under section 101(a)(2) to implement the Agreement shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be issued within 1 year after the date on which the Agreement enters into force. In the case of any implementing action that takes effect on a date after the date on which the Agreement enters into force, initial regulations to carry out that action shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be issued within 1 year after such effective date.

SEC. 104. CONSULTATION AND LAYOVER PROVISIONS FOR, AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF, PROCLAIMED ACTIONS.

If a provision of this Act provides that the implementation of an action by the President by proclamation is subject to the consultation and layover requirements of this section, such action may be proclaimed only if—

(1) the President has obtained advice regarding the proposed action from—

(A) the appropriate advisory committees established under section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155); and

(B) the United States International Trade Commission;

(2) the President has submitted to the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives a report that sets forth—

(A) the action proposed to be proclaimed and the reasons therefor; and

(B) the advice obtained under paragraph (1);

(3) a period of 60 calendar days, beginning on the first day on which the requirements set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) have been met has expired; and

(4) the President has consulted with the Committees referred to in paragraph (2) regarding the proposed action during the period referred to in paragraph (3).

SEC. 105. ADMINISTRATION OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT PROCEEDINGS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OR DESIGNATION OF OFFICE.—The President is authorized to establish or designate within the Department of Commerce an office that shall be responsible for providing administrative assistance to panels established under chapter 20 of the Agreement. The office may not be considered to be an agency for purposes of section 552 of title 5, United States Code.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year after fiscal year 2006 to the Department of Commerce such sums as may be necessary for the establishment and operations of the office established or designated under subsection (a) and for the payment of the United States share of the expenses of panels established under chapter 20 of the Agreement.

SEC. 106. ARBITRATION OF CLAIMS.

The United States is authorized to resolve any claim against the United States covered by article 10.15.1(a)(i)(C) or article 10.15.1(b)(i)(C) of the Agreement, pursuant to the Investor-State Dispute Settlement procedures set forth in section B of chapter 10 of the Agreement.

SEC. 107. EFFECTIVE DATES; EFFECT OF TERMINATION.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATES.—Except as provided in subsection (b), the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act take effect on the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—Sections 1 through 3 and this title take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT.—On the date on which the Agreement terminates, the provisions of this Act (other than this subsection) and the amendments made by this Act shall cease to be effective.

TITLE II—CUSTOMS PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. TARIFF MODIFICATIONS.

(a) TARIFF MODIFICATIONS PROVIDED FOR IN THE AGREEMENT.—

(1) PROCLAMATION AUTHORITY.—The President may proclaim—

(A) such modifications or continuation of any duty,

(B) such continuation of duty-free or excise treatment, or

(C) such additional duties,

as the President determines to be necessary or appropriate to carry out or apply articles 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2.8, and 3.2.9, and Annex 2–B of the Agreement.

(2) EFFECT ON OMANI GSP STATUS.—Notwithstanding section 502(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2462(a)(1)), the President shall, on the date on which the Agreement enters into force, terminate the designation of Oman as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of title V of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2461 et seq.).

(b) OTHER TARIFF MODIFICATIONS.—Subject to the consultation and layover provisions of section 104, the President may proclaim—

(1) such modifications or continuation of any duty,

(2) such modifications as the United States may agree to with Oman regarding the staging of any duty treatment set forth in Annex 2–B of the Agreement,

(3) such continuation of duty-free or excise treatment, or

(4) such additional duties,

as the President determines to be necessary or appropriate to maintain the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to Oman provided for by the Agreement.

(c) CONVERSION TO AD VALOREM RATES.—For purposes of subsections (a) and (b), with respect to any good for which the base rate in the Tariff Schedule of the United States to Annex 2–B of the Agreement is a specific or compound rate of duty, the President may substitute for the base rate an ad valorem rate that the President determines to be equivalent to the base rate.

SEC. 202. RULES OF ORIGIN.

(a) APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION.—In this section:

(1) TARIFF CLASSIFICATION.—The basis for any tariff classification is the HTS.

(2) REFERENCE TO HTS.—Whenever in this section there is a reference to a heading or subheading, such reference shall be a reference to a heading or subheading of the HTS.

(b) ORIGINATING GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this Act and for purposes of implementing the preferential tariff treatment provided for under the Agreement, a good is an originating good if—

(A) the good is imported directly—

(i) from the territory of Oman into the territory of the United States; or

(ii) from the territory of the United States into the territory of Oman; and

(B)(i) the good is a good wholly the growth, product, or manufacture of Oman or the United States, or both;

(ii) the good (other than a good to which clause (iii) applies) is a new or different article of commerce that has been grown, produced, or manufactured in Oman or the United States, or both, and meets the requirements of paragraph (2); or

(iii)(I) the good is a good covered by Annex 3–A or 4–A of the Agreement;

(II)(aa) each of the nonoriginating materials used in the production of the good undergoes an applicable change in tariff classification specified in such Annex as a result of production occurring entirely in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both; or

(bb) the good otherwise satisfies the requirements specified in such Annex; and

(III) the good satisfies all other applicable requirements of this section.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A good described in paragraph (1)(B)(ii) is an originating good only if the sum of—

(A) the value of each material produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, and

(B) the direct costs of processing operations performed in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both,

is not less than 35 percent of the appraised value of the good at the time the good is entered into the territory of the United States.

(c) CUMULATION.—

(1) ORIGINATING GOOD OR MATERIAL INCORPORATED INTO GOODS OF OTHER COUNTRY.—An originating good, or a material produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, that is incorporated into a good in the territory of the other country shall be considered to originate in the territory of the other country.

(2) MULTIPLE PRODUCERS.—A good that is grown, produced, or manufactured in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, by 1 or more producers, is an originating good if the good satisfies the requirements of subsection (b) and all other applicable requirements of this section.

(d) VALUE OF MATERIALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the value of a material produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, includes the following:

(A) The price actually paid or payable for the material by the producer of the good.

(B) The freight, insurance, packing, and all other costs incurred in transporting the material to the producer's plant, if such costs

are not included in the price referred to in subparagraph (A).

(C) The cost of waste or spoilage resulting from the use of the material in the growth, production, or manufacture of the good, less the value of recoverable scrap.

(D) Taxes or customs duties imposed on the material by Oman or the United States, or both, if the taxes or customs duties are not remitted upon exportation from the territory of Oman or the United States, as the case may be.

(2) EXCEPTION.—If the relationship between the producer of a good and the seller of a material influenced the price actually paid or payable for the material, or if there is no price actually paid or payable by the producer for the material, the value of the material produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, includes the following:

(A) All expenses incurred in the growth, production, or manufacture of the material, including general expenses.

(B) A reasonable amount for profit.

(C) Freight, insurance, packing, and all other costs incurred in transporting the material to the producer's plant.

(e) PACKAGING AND PACKING MATERIALS AND CONTAINERS FOR RETAIL SALE AND FOR SHIPMENT.—Packaging and packing materials and containers for retail sale and shipment shall be disregarded in determining whether a good qualifies as an originating good, except to the extent that the value of such packaging and packing materials and containers has been included in meeting the requirements set forth in subsection (b)(2).

(f) INDIRECT MATERIALS.—Indirect materials shall be disregarded in determining whether a good qualifies as an originating good, except that the cost of such indirect materials may be included in meeting the requirements set forth in subsection (b)(2).

(g) TRANSIT AND TRANSSHIPMENT.—A good shall not be considered to meet the requirement of subsection (b)(1)(A) if, after exportation from the territory of Oman or the United States, the good undergoes production, manufacturing, or any other operation outside the territory of Oman or the United States, other than unloading, reloading, or any other operation necessary to preserve the good in good condition or to transport the good to the territory of Oman or the United States.

(h) TEXTILE AND APPAREL GOODS.—

(1) DE MINIMIS AMOUNTS OF NONORIGINATING MATERIALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), a textile or apparel good that is not an originating good because certain fibers or yarns used in the production of the component of the good that determines the tariff classification of the good do not undergo an applicable change in tariff classification set out in Annex 3–A of the Agreement shall be considered to be an originating good if the total weight of all such fibers or yarns in that component is not more than 7 percent of the total weight of that component.

(B) CERTAIN TEXTILE OR APPAREL GOODS.—A textile or apparel good containing elastomeric yarns in the component of the good that determines the tariff classification of the good shall be considered to be an originating good only if such yarns are wholly formed in the territory of Oman or the United States.

(C) YARN, FABRIC, OR GROUP OF FIBERS.—For purposes of this paragraph, in the case of a textile or apparel good that is a yarn, fabric, or group of fibers, the term ''component of the good that determines the tariff classification of the good'' means all of the fibers in the yarn, fabric, or group of fibers.

(2) GOODS PUT UP IN SETS FOR RETAIL SALE.—Notwithstanding the rules set forth in Annex 3–A of the Agreement, textile or apparel goods classifiable as goods put up in sets for retail sale as provided for in General Rule of Interpretation 3 of the HTS shall not be considered to be originating goods unless each of the goods in the set is an originating good or the total value of the nonoriginating goods in the set does not exceed 10 percent of the value of the set determined for purposes of assessing customs duties.

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECT COSTS OF PROCESSING OPERATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''direct costs of processing operations'', with respect to a good, includes, to the extent they are includable in the appraised value of the good when imported into Oman or the United States, as the case may be, the following:

(i) All actual labor costs involved in the growth, production, or manufacture of the good, including fringe benefits, on-the-job training, and the cost of engineering, supervisory, quality control, and similar personnel.

(ii) Tools, dies, molds, and other indirect materials, and depreciation on machinery and equipment that are allocable to the good.

(iii) Research, development, design, engineering, and blueprint costs, to the extent that they are allocable to the good.

(iv) Costs of inspecting and testing the good.

(v) Costs of packaging the good for export to the territory of the other country.

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—The term ''direct costs of processing operations'' does not include costs that are not directly attributable to a good or are not costs of growth, production, or manufacture of the good, such as—

(i) profit; and

(ii) general expenses of doing business that are either not allocable to the good or are not related to the growth, production, or manufacture of the good, such as administrative salaries, casualty and liability insurance, advertising, and sales staff salaries, commissions, or expenses.

(2) GOOD.—The term ''good'' means any merchandise, product, article, or material.

(3) GOOD WHOLLY THE GROWTH, PRODUCT, OR MANUFACTURE OF OMAN OR THE UNITED STATES, OR BOTH.—The term ''good wholly the growth, product, or manufacture of Oman or the United States, or both'' means—

(A) a mineral good extracted in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both;

(B) a vegetable good, as such a good is provided for in the HTS, harvested in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both;

(C) a live animal born and raised in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both;

(D) a good obtained from live animals raised in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both;

(E) a good obtained from hunting, trapping, or fishing in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both;

(F) a good (fish, shellfish, and other marine life) taken from the sea by vessels registered or recorded with Oman or the United States and flying the flag of that country;

(G) a good produced from goods referred to in subparagraph (F) on board factory ships registered or recorded with Oman or the United States and flying the flag of that country;

(H) a good taken by Oman or the United States or a person of Oman or the United States from the seabed or beneath the seabed outside territorial waters, if Oman or the United States, as the case may be, has rights to exploit such seabed;

(I) a good taken from outer space, if such good is obtained by Oman or the United States or a person of Oman or the United States and not processed in the territory of a country other than Oman or the United States;

(J) waste and scrap derived from—

(i) production or manufacture in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both; or

(ii) used goods collected in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, if such goods are fit only for the recovery of raw materials;

(K) a recovered good derived in the territory of Oman or the United States from used goods and utilized in the territory of that country in the production of remanufactured goods; and

(L) a good produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both, exclusively—

(i) from goods referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (J), or

(ii) from the derivatives of goods referred to in clause (i),

at any stage of production.

(4) INDIRECT MATERIAL.—The term ''indirect material'' means a good used in the growth, production, manufacture, testing, or inspection of a good but not physically incorporated into the good, or a good used in the maintenance of buildings or the operation of equipment associated with the growth, production, or manufacture of a good, including—

(A) fuel and energy;

(B) tools, dies, and molds;

(C) spare parts and materials used in the maintenance of equipment and buildings;

(D) lubricants, greases, compounding materials, and other materials used in the growth, production, or manufacture of a good or used to operate equipment and buildings;

(E) gloves, glasses, footwear, clothing, safety equipment, and supplies;

(F) equipment, devices, and supplies used for testing or inspecting the good;

(G) catalysts and solvents; and

(H) any other goods that are not incorporated into the good but the use of which in the growth, production, or manufacture of the good can reasonably be demonstrated to be a part of that growth, production, or manufacture.

(5) MATERIAL.—The term ''material'' means a good, including a part or ingredient, that is used in the growth, production, or manufacture of another good that is a new or different article of commerce that has been grown, produced, or manufactured in Oman or the United States, or both.

(6) MATERIAL PRODUCED IN THE TERRITORY OF OMAN OR THE UNITED STATES, OR BOTH.—The term ''material produced in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both'' means a good that is either wholly the growth, product, or manufacture of Oman or the United States, or both, or a new or different article of commerce that has been grown, produced, or manufactured in the territory of Oman or the United States, or both.

(7) NEW OR DIFFERENT ARTICLE OF COMMERCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''new or different article of commerce'' means, except as provided in subparagraph (B), a good that—

(i) has been substantially transformed from a good or material that is not wholly the growth, product, or manufacture of Oman or the United States, or both; and

(ii) has a new name, character, or use distinct from the good or material from which it was transformed.

(B) EXCEPTION.—A good shall not be considered a new or different article of commerce by virtue of having undergone simple combining or packaging operations, or mere dilution with water or another substance that

does not materially alter the characteristics of the good.

(8) RECOVERED GOODS.—The term ''recovered goods'' means materials in the form of individual parts that result from—

(A) the disassembly of used goods into individual parts; and

(B) the cleaning, inspecting, testing, or other processing of those parts as necessary for improvement to sound working condition.

(9) REMANUFACTURED GOOD.—The term ''remanufactured good'' means an industrial good that is assembled in the territory of Oman or the United States and that—

(A) is entirely or partially comprised of recovered goods;

(B) has a similar life expectancy to a like good that is new; and

(C) enjoys a factory warranty similar to that of a like good that is new.

(10) SIMPLE COMBINING OR PACKAGING OPERATIONS.—The term ''simple combining or packaging operations'' means operations such as adding batteries to devices, fitting together a small number of components by bolting, gluing, or soldering, and repacking or packaging components together.

(11) SUBSTANTIALLY TRANSFORMED.—The term ''substantially transformed'' means, with respect to a good or material, changed as the result of a manufacturing or processing operation so that—

(A)(i) the good or material is converted from a good that has multiple uses into a good or material that has limited uses;

(ii) the physical properties of the good or material are changed to a significant extent; or

(iii) the operation undergone by the good or material is complex by reason of the number of different processes and materials involved and the time and level of skill required to perform those processes; and

(B) the good or material loses its separate identity in the manufacturing or processing operation.

(j) PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to proclaim, as part of the HTS—

(A) the provisions set forth in Annex 3–A and Annex 4–A of the Agreement; and

(B) any additional subordinate category that is necessary to carry out this title, consistent with the Agreement.

(2) MODIFICATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the consultation and layover provisions of section 104, the President may proclaim modifications to the provisions proclaimed under the authority of paragraph (1)(A), other than provisions of chapters 50 through 63 of the HTS (as included in Annex 3–A of the Agreement).

(B) ADDITIONAL PROCLAMATIONS.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), and subject to the consultation and layover provisions of section 104, the President may proclaim—

(i) modifications to the provisions proclaimed under the authority of paragraph (1)(A) as are necessary to implement an agreement with Oman pursuant to article 3.2.5 of the Agreement; and

(ii) before the end of the 1-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, modifications to correct any typographical, clerical, or other nonsubstantive technical error regarding the provisions of chapters 50 through 63 of the HTS (as included in Annex 3–A of the Agreement).

SEC. 203. CUSTOMS USER FEES.

Section 13031(b) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(b)) is amended by adding after paragraph (16) the following:

''(17) No fee may be charged under subsection (a) (9) or (10) with respect to goods that qualify as originating goods under section 202 of the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. Any service for which an exemption from such fee is provided by reason of this paragraph may not be funded with money contained in the Customs User Fee Account.''.

SEC. 204. ENFORCEMENT RELATING TO TRADE IN TEXTILE AND APPAREL GOODS.

(a) ACTION DURING VERIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of the Treasury requests the Government of Oman to conduct a verification pursuant to article 3.3 of the Agreement for purposes of making a determination under paragraph (2), the President may direct the Secretary to take appropriate action described in subsection (b) while the verification is being conducted.

(2) DETERMINATION.—A determination under this paragraph is a determination—

(A) that an exporter or producer in Oman is complying with applicable customs laws, regulations, procedures, requirements, or practices affecting trade in textile or apparel goods; or

(B) that a claim that a textile or apparel good exported or produced by such exporter or producer—

(i) qualifies as an originating good under section 202, or

(ii) is a good of Oman,

is accurate.

(b) APPROPRIATE ACTION DESCRIBED.—Appropriate action under subsection (a)(1) includes—

(1) suspension of liquidation of the entry of any textile or apparel good exported or produced by the person that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding compliance described in subsection (a)(2)(A), in a case in which the request for verification was based on a reasonable suspicion of unlawful activity related to such good; and

(2) suspension of liquidation of the entry of a textile or apparel good for which a claim has been made that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding a claim described in subsection (a)(2)(B).

(c) ACTION WHEN INFORMATION IS INSUFFICIENT.—If the Secretary of the Treasury determines that the information obtained within 12 months after making a request for a verification under subsection (a)(1) is insufficient to make a determination under subsection (a)(2), the President may direct the Secretary to take appropriate action described in subsection (d) until such time as the Secretary receives information sufficient to make a determination under subsection (a)(2) or until such earlier date as the President may direct.

(d) APPROPRIATE ACTION DESCRIBED.—Appropriate action referred to in subsection (c) includes—

(1) publication of the name and address of the person that is the subject of the verification;

(2) denial of preferential tariff treatment under the Agreement to—

(A) any textile or apparel good exported or produced by the person that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding compliance described in subsection (a)(2)(A); or

(B) a textile or apparel good for which a claim has been made that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding a claim described in subsection (a)(2)(B); and

(3) denial of entry into the United States of—

(A) any textile or apparel good exported or produced by the person that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding compliance described in subsection (a)(2)(A); or

(B) a textile or apparel good for which a claim has been made that is the subject of a verification referred to in subsection (a)(1) regarding a claim described in subsection (a)(2)(B).

SEC. 205. RELIQUIDATION OF ENTRIES.

Subsection (d) of section 520 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1520(d)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''or''; and

(B) by striking ''for which'' and inserting '', or section 202 of the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act for which''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''and information'' after ''documentation''.

SEC. 206. REGULATIONS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out—

(1) subsections (a) through (i) of section 202;

(2) the amendment made by section 203; and

(3) proclamations issued under section 202(j).

TITLE III—RELIEF FROM IMPORTS

SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) OMANI ARTICLE.—The term ''Omani article'' means an article that—

(A) qualifies as an originating good under section 202(b); or

(B) receives preferential tariff treatment under paragraphs 8 through 11 of article 3.2 of the Agreement.

(2) OMANI TEXTILE OR APPAREL ARTICLE.—The term ''Omani textile or apparel article'' means an article that—

(A) is listed in the Annex to the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing referred to in section 101(d)(4) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(4)); and

(B) is an Omani article.

(3) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the United States International Trade Commission.

Subtitle A—Relief From Imports Benefiting From the Agreement

SEC. 311. COMMENCING OF ACTION FOR RELIEF.

(a) FILING OF PETITION.—A petition requesting action under this subtitle for the purpose of adjusting to the obligations of the United States under the Agreement may be filed with the Commission by an entity, including a trade association, firm, certified or recognized union, or group of workers, that is representative of an industry. The Commission shall transmit a copy of any petition filed under this subsection to the United States Trade Representative.

(b) INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION.—Upon the filing of a petition under subsection (a), the Commission, unless subsection (d) applies, shall promptly initiate an investigation to determine whether, as a result of the reduction or elimination of a duty provided for under the Agreement, an Omani article is being imported into the United States in such increased quantities, in absolute terms or relative to domestic production, and under such conditions that imports of the Omani article constitute a substantial cause of serious injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry producing an article that is like, or directly competitive with, the imported article.

(c) APPLICABLE PROVISIONS.—The following provisions of section 202 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2252) apply with respect to any investigation initiated under subsection (b):

(1) Paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (b).

(2) Subsection (c).

(3) Subsection (i).

(d) ARTICLES EXEMPT FROM INVESTIGATION.—No investigation may be initiated

under this section with respect to any Omani article if, after the date on which the Agreement enters into force with respect to the United States, import relief has been provided with respect to that Omani article under this subtitle.

SEC. 312. COMMISSION ACTION ON PETITION.

(a) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which an investigation is initiated under section 311(b) with respect to a petition, the Commission shall make the determination required under that section.

(b) APPLICABLE PROVISIONS.—For purposes of this subtitle, the provisions of paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 330(d) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1330(d) (1), (2), and (3)) shall be applied with respect to determinations and findings made under this section as if such determinations and findings were made under section 202 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2252).

(c) ADDITIONAL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION IF DETERMINATION AFFIRMATIVE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the determination made by the Commission under subsection (a) with respect to imports of an article is affirmative, or if the President may consider a determination of the Commission to be an affirmative determination as provided for under paragraph (1) of section 330(d) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1330(d)), the Commission shall find, and recommend to the President in the report required under subsection (d), the amount of import relief that is necessary to remedy or prevent the injury found by the Commission in the determination and to facilitate the efforts of the domestic industry to make a positive adjustment to import competition.

(2) LIMITATION ON RELIEF.—The import relief recommended by the Commission under this subsection shall be limited to that described in section 313(c).

(3) VOTING; SEPARATE VIEWS.—Only those members of the Commission who voted in the affirmative under subsection (a) are eligible to vote on the proposed action to remedy or prevent the injury found by the Commission. Members of the Commission who did not vote in the affirmative may submit, in the report required under subsection (d), separate views regarding what action, if any, should be taken to remedy or prevent the injury.

(d) REPORT TO PRESIDENT.—Not later than the date that is 30 days after the date on which a determination is made under subsection (a) with respect to an investigation, the Commission shall submit to the President a report that includes—

(1) the determination made under subsection (a) and an explanation of the basis for the determination;

(2) if the determination under subsection (a) is affirmative, any findings and recommendations for import relief made under subsection (c) and an explanation of the basis for each recommendation; and

(3) any dissenting or separate views by members of the Commission regarding the determination and recommendation referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(e) PUBLIC NOTICE.—Upon submitting a report to the President under subsection (d), the Commission shall promptly make public such report (with the exception of information which the Commission determines to be confidential) and shall cause a summary thereof to be published in the Federal Register.

SEC. 313. PROVISION OF RELIEF.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President receives the report of the Commission in which the Commission's determination under section 312(a) is affirmative, or which contains a determination under section 312(a) that the President considers to be affirmative under paragraph (1) of section 330(d) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1330(d)(1)), the President, subject to subsection (b), shall provide relief from imports of the article that is the subject of such determination to the extent that the President determines necessary to remedy or prevent the injury found by the Commission and to facilitate the efforts of the domestic industry to make a positive adjustment to import competition.

(b) EXCEPTION.—The President is not required to provide import relief under this section if the President determines that the provision of the import relief will not provide greater economic and social benefits than costs.

(c) NATURE OF RELIEF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The import relief that the President is authorized to provide under this section with respect to imports of an article is as follows:

(A) The suspension of any further reduction provided for under Annex 2–B of the Agreement in the duty imposed on such article.

(B) An increase in the rate of duty imposed on such article to a level that does not exceed the lesser of—

(i) the column 1 general rate of duty imposed under the HTS on like articles at the time the import relief is provided; or

(ii) the column 1 general rate of duty imposed under the HTS on like articles on the day before the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

(2) PROGRESSIVE LIBERALIZATION.—If the period for which import relief is provided under this section is greater than 1 year, the President shall provide for the progressive liberalization of such relief at regular intervals during the period in which the relief is in effect.

(d) PERIOD OF RELIEF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), any import relief that the President provides under this section may not, in the aggregate, be in effect for more than 3 years.

(2) EXTENSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the initial period for any import relief provided under this section is less than 3 years, the President, after receiving a determination from the Commission under subparagraph (B) that is affirmative, or which the President considers to be affirmative under paragraph (1) of section 330(d) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1330(d)(1)), may extend the effective period of any import relief provided under this section, subject to the limitation under paragraph (1), if the President determines that—

(i) the import relief continues to be necessary to remedy or prevent serious injury and to facilitate adjustment by the domestic industry to import competition; and

(ii) there is evidence that the industry is making a positive adjustment to import competition.

(B) ACTION BY COMMISSION.—

(i) INVESTIGATION.—Upon a petition on behalf of the industry concerned that is filed with the Commission not earlier than the date which is 9 months, and not later than the date which is 6 months, before the date any action taken under subsection (a) is to terminate, the Commission shall conduct an investigation to determine whether action under this section continues to be necessary to remedy or prevent serious injury and to facilitate adjustment by the domestic industry to import competition and whether there is evidence that the industry is making a positive adjustment to import competition.

(ii) NOTICE AND HEARING.—The Commission shall publish notice of the commencement of any proceeding under this subparagraph in the Federal Register and shall, within a reasonable time thereafter, hold a public hearing at which the Commission shall afford interested parties and consumers an opportunity to be present, to present evidence, and to respond to the presentations of other parties and consumers, and otherwise to be heard.

(iii) REPORT.—The Commission shall transmit to the President a report on its investigation and determination under this subparagraph not later than 60 days before the action under subsection (a) is to terminate, unless the President specifies a different date.

(e) RATE AFTER TERMINATION OF IMPORT RELIEF.—When import relief under this section is terminated with respect to an article, the rate of duty on that article shall be the rate that would have been in effect, but for the provision of such relief, on the date on which the relief terminates.

(f) ARTICLES EXEMPT FROM RELIEF.—No import relief may be provided under this section on any article that has been subject to import relief under this subtitle after the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

SEC. 314. TERMINATION OF RELIEF AUTHORITY.

(a) GENERAL RULE.—Subject to subsection (b), no import relief may be provided under this subtitle after the date that is 10 years after the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

(b) PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION.—Import relief may be provided under this subtitle in the case of an Omani article after the date on which such relief would, but for this subsection, terminate under subsection (a), if the President determines that Oman has consented to such relief.

SEC. 315. COMPENSATION AUTHORITY.

For purposes of section 123 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2133), any import relief provided by the President under section 313 shall be treated as action taken under chapter 1 of title II of such Act (19 U.S.C. 2251 et seq.).

SEC. 316. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION.

Section 202(a)(8) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2252(a)(8)) is amended in the first sentence—

(1) by striking ''and''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end '', and title III of the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act''.

Subtitle B—Textile and Apparel Safeguard Measures

SEC. 321. COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION FOR RELIEF.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A request under this subtitle for the purpose of adjusting to the obligations of the United States under the Agreement may be filed with the President by an interested party. Upon the filing of a request, the President shall review the request to determine, from information presented in the request, whether to commence consideration of the request.

(b) PUBLICATION OF REQUEST.—If the President determines that the request under subsection (a) provides the information necessary for the request to be considered, the President shall cause to be published in the Federal Register a notice of commencement of consideration of the request, and notice seeking public comments regarding the request. The notice shall include a summary of the request and the dates by which comments and rebuttals must be received.

SEC. 322. DETERMINATION AND PROVISION OF RELIEF.

(a) DETERMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a positive determination is made under section 321(b), the President shall determine whether, as a result of

the reduction or elimination of a duty under the Agreement, an Omani textile or apparel article is being imported into the United States in such increased quantities, in absolute terms or relative to the domestic market for that article, and under such conditions as to cause serious damage, or actual threat thereof, to a domestic industry producing an article that is like, or directly competitive with, the imported article.

(2) SERIOUS DAMAGE.—In making a determination under paragraph (1), the President—

(A) shall examine the effect of increased imports on the domestic industry, as reflected in changes in such relevant economic factors as output, productivity, utilization of capacity, inventories, market share, exports, wages, employment, domestic prices, profits, and investment, none of which is necessarily decisive; and

(B) shall not consider changes in technology or consumer preference as factors supporting a determination of serious damage or actual threat thereof.

(b) PROVISION OF RELIEF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a determination under subsection (a) is affirmative, the President may provide relief from imports of the article that is the subject of such determination, as described in paragraph (2), to the extent that the President determines necessary to remedy or prevent the serious damage and to facilitate adjustment by the domestic industry to import competition.

(2) NATURE OF RELIEF.—The relief that the President is authorized to provide under this subsection with respect to imports of an article is an increase in the rate of duty imposed on the article to a level that does not exceed the lesser of—

(A) the column 1 general rate of duty imposed under the HTS on like articles at the time the import relief is provided; or

(B) the column 1 general rate of duty imposed under the HTS on like articles on the day before the date on which the Agreement enters into force.

SEC. 323. PERIOD OF RELIEF.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), any import relief that the President provides under subsection (b) of section 322 may not, in the aggregate, be in effect for more than 3 years.

(b) EXTENSION.—If the initial period for any import relief provided under section 322 is less than 3 years, the President may extend the effective period of any import relief provided under that section, subject to the limitation set forth in subsection (a), if the President determines that—

(1) the import relief continues to be necessary to remedy or prevent serious damage and to facilitate adjustment by the domestic industry to import competition; and

(2) there is evidence that the industry is making a positive adjustment to import competition.

SEC. 324. ARTICLES EXEMPT FROM RELIEF.

The President may not provide import relief under this subtitle with respect to any article if—

(1) the article has been subject to import relief under this subtitle after the date on which the Agreement enters into force; or

(2) the article is subject to import relief under chapter 1 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2251 et seq.).

SEC. 325. RATE AFTER TERMINATION OF IMPORT RELIEF.

When import relief under this subtitle is terminated with respect to an article, the rate of duty on that article shall be the rate that would have been in effect, but for the provision of such relief, on the date on which the relief terminates.

SEC. 326. TERMINATION OF RELIEF AUTHORITY.

No import relief may be provided under this subtitle with respect to any article after the date that is 10 years after the date on which duties on the article are eliminated pursuant to the Agreement.

SEC. 327. COMPENSATION AUTHORITY.

For purposes of section 123 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2133), any import relief provided by the President under this subtitle shall be treated as action taken under chapter 1 of title II of such Act.

SEC. 328. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION.

The President may not release information that is submitted in a proceeding under this subtitle and that the President considers to be confidential business information unless the party submitting the confidential business information had notice, at the time of submission, that such information would be released, or such party subsequently consents to the release of the information. To the extent a party submits confidential business information to the President in a proceeding under this subtitle, the party shall also submit a nonconfidential version of the information, in which the confidential business information is summarized or, if necessary, deleted.

TITLE IV—PROCUREMENT

SEC. 401. ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS.

Section 308(4)(A) of the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (19 U.S.C. 2518(4)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' at the end of clause (iv);

(2) by striking the period at the end of clause (v) and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(vi) a party to the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, a product or service of that country or instrumentality which is covered under that Agreement for procurement by the United States.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 925, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 1 hour.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. THOMAS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, this particular agreement is an important one for a number of reasons. One, the United States and Oman have been friends in a formal way for almost 100 years. The Sultanate of Oman occupies an important geopolitical location in the world, which has become even more meaningful in recent times.

Oman has shown its true friendship to the United States because of the adage: ''A friend in need is a friend indeed.'' And Oman has been a friend in the Middle Eastern portion of the world when we needed a friend indeed.

In addition to that, this free trade agreement is significant in the advancement of opening trade in a number of areas very quickly, sort of a solid, leading-edge kind of agreement that we would like to see in a number of other countries around the world.

One of the remarks that might be made is, Oman, Oman, let me double-check, take a look at an atlas or the globe, and then ask, to what extent are we dealing with significant trade with the United States?

The answer is, the United States is the world's largest importer and the world's largest exporter, so when you measure significance of trade, sometimes you would ask yourself not what the impact is on the United States, but what the impact would be on the country in which we are entering into this free trade agreement. And to Oman, I believe it is extremely important as it continues to modernize itself under the Sultan and continues to extend freedoms and liberties to its people.

Yes, it is oil rich. They know that is a limited resource. They are interested in investing in their people. We are interested in helping them do that.

But it cannot go unmentioned that we also need, as we look at the globe or the atlas, to make note of the location of Oman, and that this agreement can be seen in any number of ways, and one of the ways would be to allow for a closer economic relationship with a friend that has had a close security relationship with the United States.

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Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me agree with the chairman of the committee. This agreement is important not from an economic standpoint, it would have little or no impact on our economy. For political reasons it would be important. For security reasons it would be important.

But I think that most Members would agree that we should have a trade policy that is not a Democratic trade policy or a Republican trade policy. We should have one that reflects the people of the United States of America through the people's House, which is the House of Representatives. And over the years, it appears more and more that the United States Trade Representatives will deal with the majority, but on issues that we think are important we have to deal with the country itself. This is wrong. Whatever divisions we have politically in our country, we ought to keep it on this side of our flag and not have to expose these differences with foreigners.

So often we have Presidents of Peru and Ambassadors from Oman indicating that the majority party has said we can get this out but you have to talk with the Democrats. Well, you shouldn't have to talk with the Democrats, but the United States Trade Representative should have to talk with us and Republicans and members of the committee.

The House, to a large extent, relies on the expertise that is developed by those of us who are privileged to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, and we owe it to our Members to say what is in the trade bill and what is not in the trade bill. But also, in order to give a fair explanation, we should

know what USTR intends to put in the bill.

Now, over the years, all we have said is this: The the details of a bill should be fair, and as far as I am concerned, America should have a fair advantage. We should make certain that we are able to see that our products have access to their markets. But there is also something that I think is a principle that is American, and that is that the basic rights of the workers should be protected. On so many bills the religious leaders, the labor leaders, the farmers, the peasants come to us and say, Please support the bill but please make certain that you have the same type of protections in that bill to protect our rights of assembly, protect our rights to strike, as you have in that bill for intellectual property rights.

We have taken the lowest possible denominator and taken the International Labor Organization regulations. And we have had people say they have no problem with that, but somehow that is never, but never, discussed in our committee even though we have an amendment that deals with the Peruvian Free Trade Agreement that at this very moment is in the hearing room. We are not talking about it. We are debating an amendment. What we should be talking about is what is good for both of these countries and can we walk away from these trade agreements knowing that it is good for America, but we are not driving the workers to the lowest possible denominator; but we would like to be able to say that there are basic protections for the people, especially in developing countries that we do business with.

So, Mr. Speaker, Democrats have to be respected. We may be in the minority, but we should not be excluded in participating in discussions with the United States Trade Representatives. And the United States Trade Representatives should not send us to foreign representatives in order to see what we can get in the bill. They are supposed to be our negotiators the same way they are the majority party's negotiators. That does not happen. I do believe that it should.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), who is the senior member of the Trade Subcommittee, who has put in hours of work on this, and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 20 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control the 20 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER).

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, President Bush called for the creation of a Middle East Free Trade Area in 10 years to bring the Middle East into an expanding circle of opportunity. To date the administration has successfully negotiated free trade agreements with Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman to provide a solid foundation for the MEFTA initiative.

As the Wall Street Journal noted in an editorial the other day: ''The deal would make all U.S. industrial and consumer products duty free immediately and phase out farm tariffs over 10 years.''

The promise of the Omani agreement before us is expanded market opportunities for U.S. exporters, greater financial integrity in the world economy, and enhanced regional stability. Overall, by developing greater economic friendship in the Middle East with modernizing economies like Oman, we also advance America's national security objectives in the broader war on terrorism.

As the 9/11 Commission report recommended, ''Any comprehensive U.S. strategy to counterterrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve their lives.'' The U.S.-Oman FTA embodies this principle.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement and urge its passage in the House.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5684.

Mr. Speaker, this Oman FTA is harmful and unbalanced and threatens our National Security.

This FTA is just a small part of a larger trade policy that has not been in the best interest of U.S. workers, small businesses, farmers or the economy and environment.

I have voted against every harmful and unbalanced trade agreement that has come before this HOUSE.

I would welcome the opportunity to vote for an agreement with strong and enforceable labor and environmental protections.

Unfortunately the U.S.-Oman FTA has neither of these and I will be voting against this bad trade deal.

The FTA falls short of the labor protections that must be included to make an acceptable agreement.

We need a time-out on trade and stop this ''race to the bottom.''

Our trade agreements have not significantly raised the living standards in foreign nations.

And U.S. trade policy has forced American workers to compete on an uneven playing field.

By defeating this FTA, we will tell the Administration that no longer will we accept harmful and unbalanced trade agreements.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement. I do that for two basic reasons.

First, this agreement contains provisions that would allow companies owned by foreign governments to move into port operations. This is one of our first opportunities to deal with this since this matter became a matter of attention of this body earlier this year when Dubai Ports World attempted to take over port operations in many ports in the United States, including my own port of Baltimore. We spoke pretty decisively about our concern about allowing companies owned by foreign countries to be involved in principal port operations.

The language in this free trade agreement opens the door for exactly that to occur. Under the services provision, there is a provision that allows landside aspects of U.S. port activities, including operation and maintenance of docks; loading and unloading of vessels directly to and from land; marine cargo handling; operation and maintenance of piers; ship cleaning; stevedoring; transfer of cargo between vessels and trucks, trains, pipelines, and wharves; and waterfront terminal operations, to be given out to the Omanian companies that could very well be owned by that government.

To make the matter even worse, if the Dubai Ports World were to establish operations in Oman, then they could actually come in and operate our ports under the protection of this agreement.

You will hear during the course of this debate that the United States has the ability to prevent that from happening. And, Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that under any trade agreement, no other country can order us to do anything other than what we want to do. We maintain sovereignty.

But let me remind you that under trade agreements there are certain penalties that are imposed if we do not live up to those provisions. We in Congress were required to change our Foreign Sales Corporation tax laws. We did it. We didn't have to do it, but if we did not do it, tariffs would have been imposed and continued to be imposed against our products.

So this is a serious issue. The United States has the opportunity under this agreement to block such an operation under the essential security exception. However, Oman would have the right to challenge that under dispute settlement, and under chapter 20 we have not excluded this determination from dispute settlement resolution. It can happen. The pressure can build on our country. We do not have a very good track record with dispute settlement tribunals. In fact, our record is around less than 20 percent success when it comes to imposing penalties against the United States. This administration has already shown a willingness to allow companies owned by foreign countries to operate port facilities in the United States. This is another opportunity for them to move forward on

this. Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility. We have a chance to speak on this, and we should speak with a clear voice in rejecting this agreement.

The second area of concern that I will talk about during the course of this debate deals with Oman's failure to meet International Labor Organization standards. And I will give you chapter and verse of letters that we have written because, as you know, the standard is enforce your own laws, and Omanian laws are not up to ILO standards. Foreign workers in Oman do not have the right to join a union for a year. They are required to speak Arabic before leading a union. And the Government of Oman still does not have a law that prohibits employers from withholding passports or other documentations from the 80 percent of foreign workers in Oman, practices that can lead to human trafficking, as we have seen in Jordan. There are still inadequate laws to protect against anti-union activities. And the list goes on and on and on.

In Bahrain we not only had the commitment to change law, we saw the change in practice. We do not have that in Oman. We have not met the Bahrainian standard, and for that reason alone this agreement should be rejected.

So whether it is a matter of national security in regards to our ports or a matter of standing up for basic international workers' rights, this agreement comes up short and should be rejected.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This trade agreement needs to pass. This trade agreement is so clearly in America's interest.

Now, when you look at the total amount of trade between the two countries, it may not seem like a big deal. A billion dollars, what is that? Four one-hundredths of 1 percent of our economy, $500 million each way. That is no big deal.

But that was my daughter calling, and that is what this is really about. This is about the future; whether we engage with the peaceful and progressive Arab world or whether we blow up the bridges that they are trying to build with America and with the modern Western world.

Oman was the first Arab country to send an Ambassador to the United States. Today, they have the first woman and the only Arab woman Ambassador to the United States. They are showing by their actions that they get it. They understand that when 60 percent of their population is under the age of 18, they have got to go forward, not backward to fundamentalism and to the kind of theocracy that has hampered so many of their neighbors. They need to move forward. But they need the help of the United States to move forward.

Now, as I say, the amount of trade is inconsequential. It is not going to affect organized labor here. It is not going to affect any particular industry, although I have to say that it is pretty much a one-way street. What they buy from us is transport equipment, manufactured products that generate jobs in this country. And what we buy from them is largely natural resources, and some textiles, but mostly oil and gas. They want to be able to buy more. They want to make it easier for us to sell by reducing tariffs and quotas.

□ 1230

But, most importantly, is the larger context of this agreement. Oman sits on the Strait of Hormuz. More than 20 percent of the world's oil supply goes through that strait. Guess who sits on the other side of that strait? Iran. Oman is right next to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been the instigator and the promoter of an Arab boycott against Israel, and this relatively small country has dedicated itself to breaking that boycott.

We have a letter from AIPAC here supporting this because Oman has been willing to break the tertiary, secondary and primary boycotts of Israel. Here is the letter right here.

Now, when we were attacked on 9/11/2001, we put together a bipartisan commission of very thoughtful and knowledgeable people, and one of the most important recommendations that that commission came up with was that we as a country need to reach out to the modern, progressive Arab world. We have got to do it. We can't isolate ourselves from a billion-and-a-half Muslims, because then that is going to radicalize people in their country. We have got to walk through these doors that they are willing to open up and show what happens when you trade with the United States, when you trade with progressive democracies. This is exactly what that 9/11 Commission recommended.

I am pleased that we overwhelmingly supported the Bahrain Free Trade Agreement, but this is an even better trade agreement. It is hard to believe that we are questioning the fact that this is in America's interest. It is so overwhelmingly in America's interest.

A couple of red herrings have been brought up; and as much as I respect and admire my colleagues who have brought up these red herrings, we are all entitled to our own opinions, but not our own set of facts.

The facts are that we asked the Congressional Research Service to look into this. They came up with a report that was compelling and definitive: there is no national security interest involved here, because if we decide there is a national security threat, which we self-define, that trumps everything else, and at any time we can raise the essential security justification. No one else has the authority to second-guess what it takes for us to protect our national security, and there is no precedent for any kind of international panel second-guessing us. There is no national security issue here.

The language, the provisions in this treaty, are the same as have been in all the others. It is the same language as Bahrain, the same language as Central America. There is no change here.

In terms of labor law, and I will address this subsequently after people address it on the Democratic side to lay out their objections, but I have read the communication from the Sultan, as I trust others have. He is willing to agree to the labor rights issues. He wants to abide by the International Labor Organization's standards. He wants to do everything it takes to show that he gets it, that he wants a higher quality of life, a better standard of living and more worker protections in Oman than his people have today.

Now, the democratically elected Advisory Council is not in session right now, but within 3 months he will get them all passed. When the Sultan says he is going to do it, that is it. We may prefer the niceties of a democracy and so on, but the reality is that these laws are going to be changed if the Sultan commits to changing them.

So I really urge my colleagues to support this.

One other aspect that I haven't mentioned, and I will get into it in a greater degree later, Oman has a military access agreement with us. They have had it since 1981. They keep renewing it. We keep putting more and more forces through Oman for the war in Iraq. They were of immense help in the Gulf War.

I don't know what one country can do to be more deserving of a trade agreement with the United States.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I do so with a degree of trepidation, because I take the time, number one, to thank my colleague from Virginia. I hope my acknowledgment doesn't do him too much damage, because his statement was not only eloquent, but accurate and, we all know, prescient.

It is absolutely critical that we continue to build the kind of relationships in that portion of the world that this agreement reflects.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of the time and control of that time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the chairman of the Trade Subcommittee; and prior to that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida will control the balance of the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of what is a very good trade agreement, both for the United States as well as for our friend and ally, the nation of Oman.

It was interesting, I hear a lot of references in this body to those who argue that every one of the bipartisan 9/11

Commission recommendations should be implemented. Today, we have before us one of those recommendations, that is, the 9/11 Commission recommended that we as the United States work to further expand trade agreements with our friends and allies in the Mideast, and Oman is one of our oldest allies. As my colleague from Virginia noted, we have 170 years of friendship with the small nation known as Oman, a friend and ally, a cooperative partner.

This agreement that is before us is good for U.S. manufacturers, it is good for Illinois manufacturers, it is good for Illinois workers, it is good for Illinois farmers. Immediately, once it goes into force, 100 percent of manufactured goods exported from the United States to Oman are duty free. Immediately, 87 percent of U.S. farm products, corn and soybeans from Illinois, are duty free, and the remaining tariffs are phased out over a short period of time. Again, this is good for Illinois workers and manufacturers and farmers.

Also know that Oman has implemented significant labor reforms, enacted major labor reforms in 2003 and, like Bahrain, has followed up with specific commitments to ensure that its laws provide protections for workers. Again, this is a good agreement for workers as well.

Some on the other side of the aisle are trying to manufacture new issues; trying to claim that somehow by having a trade agreement with Oman, a Middle Eastern country, that we are jeopardizing our port security. It is a red herring. It is a phony issue.

The Congressional Research Service has stated that those statements are misleading. Under the review process this agreement is not affected.

This agreement deserves bipartisan support.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to correct the record.

To my friend in Virginia who quoted AIPAC, the letter was the letter addressed to me that complimented the manner in which we have worked in a bipartisan manner to deal with the Arab boycott, in both the Bahrain agreement and the Oman agreement; but it does not talk about support for this legislation.

I would also point out that our friends from the WTO have been pretty clear about the dispute settlement system working: ''It must not be possible for one country to evade its operations simply by proclaiming its national security is involved, however farfetched such a claim may be. Yet when national security is really involved, laws that are contrary to international trade rules must be permissible.'' But they said that ''no country should be allowed to be the judge and jury of its own cause.''

We don't give away our national sovereignty, but we are able to be second-guessed by a dispute settlement panel. They can rule against us, and have ruled against us, and they can put pressure on us through tariffs so we in fact compromise our security.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3½ minutes to a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, an expert on international trade and worker rights, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, Oman is a small nation, but there are some large issues here. It is an important place, and I would like to support an FTA with Oman, as I and many others did with Bahrain.

There is an important issue that relates to the path of globalization. Globalization has become increasingly controversial. Expanded trade, that I favor, has been hitting road bump after road bump. One major reason is because too many people within countries are not sharing in the benefits. Too many people are being left out. And that is why we have to care.

Among those who are being left out are workers. And how do we make sure that workers participate, are part of the process? By making sure in free trade agreements that they have their basic international rights. These are the basic ILO core labor standards, not American standards, especially the right to associate and to bargain.

In Oman, workers do not have those rights. There are no worker organizations today in Oman. There are only labor management committees, representative committees. In a document that the Department of Labor gave to us a few weeks ago, it stated that management holds 70 to 75 percent of the leadership positions in those committees. There is an umbrella committee of these RCs, and management holds all of the positions on the executive committee.

So, look, we need to have a free trade agreement that meets the basic ILO standards in practice and in law. In Bahrain, they were there in practice and they made commitments to do so in law. In Oman, Mr. MORAN and others, there is no semblance, semblance, of workers having their rights. There are no worker organizations.

Oman said to us they could not do anything until November because the Sultan had to consult. Then in the last few weeks, actually the last few days, we have a kind of statement of decrees of the Sultan. I guess he did not have to consult with the legislature. But so many of those have to be implemented by ministerial decree.

Mr. MORAN said the Sultan is willing to agree to anything. Let us see laws in place, with meaning as to what they imply.

I want to close with this. The Trade Representative has said this, our new Trade Representative, Ambassador Schwab: ''Erosion of America's traditional bipartisan support is the most pressing problem we face in trade today.''

How true. And it affects the WTO negotiations. Proceeding like this today is another nail in what is a near coffin of bipartisan trade foundations in this country. It is unnecessary.

We could take the time to see what these decrees mean, whether they are beginning to meet basic ILO standards, so that more and more people will participate in the benefits of globalization. If that doesn't happen, globalization will continue to be in deep trouble. It will lose ground when it should not.

That is one of the major reasons to oppose this agreement at this time, to oppose it. You are turning your back on any chance of bipartisanship.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan and the gentleman from Maryland and their colleagues for raising any number of labor issues in their discussion of the markup of the Omani trade agreement. In fact, in large part that resulted in the Sultan issuing a decree that incorporated virtually all of those labor laws that he could decree. And his decree is law.

For example, on July 8, 2006, this decree prohibited forced labor, including coercion by withholding travel documents of foreign employees. It endorsed collective bargaining and the use of strikes as a legitimate tool. It prohibited termination of employment or any other kind of retribution for union activity. It terminated effective immediately the Omani government's representation in union activities. It provided specific enforcement tools for violations of collective bargaining rights, and it provided rights of workers against forced or coerced labor and against child labor.

□ 1245

There are further International Labor Organization standards that the Omani Government intends to pass. It has to wait until its advisory panels meet and puts the implementing regulations into effect. But that will be done in the next 3 months. That is a pretty short period of time. The end of October is when the Sultan committed to implementing all of his labor commitments into effect.

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. So does that mean that those provisions are not in Omani law today?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Those provisions are law but a number require regulations.

Mr. LEVIN. But they are not in law, right, until there is action?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. The Sultan's decree is law. Mr. LEVIN, the purpose of a trade agreement is to advance progress and communication and economic interdependence, it seems to me. And to the extent we can, to promote social progress.

There is an enormous, profound agreement here on Oman's part that it

will adopt those standards that you and many others in this body have been urging upon countries like that. They are not perfect. I agree they are not perfect.

But Oman is not known in the Arab world or to anybody that knows Oman, as a particular violator of labor rights. I do not know of any of these kinds of forced labor places that have been referenced. I have been to Oman. I have read everything that I could.

They want to get better, but I do not think to suggest that the fact that they are not perfect now is reason to destroy, to vote against an agreement that would substantially advance the cause of labor protections.

Mr. LEVIN. First of all, there are no worker organizations today. But let me ask you this: Is there any other provision in this agreement that is based on a promise, just a promise, rather than having it in the agreement in the law between the two countries? Is there any other, like the tariff reductions, or anything else?

It is not that they promised to do something, it says ''they will be.'' And we could, instead of saying enforce your own laws, say that within a reasonable period of time that these laws shall be in place and enforceable under the agreement.

But there is no enforceability, is there? If they do not do this, if the legislature does not act, there is no ability to enforce it except to consultation, and that is it? Is there any other place in the agreement that says enforce your own laws instead of saying what they will be with enforcement?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time. You know as well as I do that it would be better if we could make labor protections a more integral part of many of these trade agreements. But I would also suggest that anybody that looks at this trade agreement with an open and objective mind would come to the conclusion that this is substantial advancement, that this is not only consistent with prior trade agreements, but this is better than prior trade agreements, and that this will create a more prosperous, a more open society in the Middle East, and that Oman is an ally that has always been dependable.

On July 8, the Sultan made these labor protection law.

The Sultan has never said anything with regard to use of troops, with regard to economic agreements, with regard to trade with Israel, which they do conduct despite all of the pressure on them from Saudi Arabia and other countries where he has not kept his word. In every instance, he has kept his word.

It seems to me that is a relevant consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the opposition to this fairly straightforward trade agreement has generated not one, not two, but a whole school of red herrings that I think have to be knocked down quickly in succession.

We have heard a little of it already this afternoon on the floor. What is fairly clear is that the U.S. FTA with Oman clearly has worked through and worked closely with the International Labor Organization, and also with civil society in Oman, the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. executive branch.

The measures that have been developed have gone through a legally mandated legislative, consultative process, and it has resulted in clear guarantees on labor.

On the matter of port security, critics of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement have manufactured an issue, and we have heard this reiterated this morning, by claiming that the agreement gives foreign service providers unprecedented access to U.S. ports and is a threat to U.S. security. This is absurd.

May I introduce for the RECORD a letter to Speaker HASTERT from the Secretary of the Treasury who says, in part, ''The FTA negotiated with Oman neither subjects national security interests to a third-party tribunal's assessment, as some have alleged, nor does it alter, amend or adjust the President's Exon-Florio statutory powers to protect the Nation's security in any way.''

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY,
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
Washington, DC, July 20, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I understand that concerns have recently arisen over the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, FTA, and its possible link to the security of U.S. ports—particularly regarding the dispute settlement provisions.

First, this agreement is strongly supportive of our national security in general and the war on terror specifically. It marks another important step in our efforts to deepen and strengthen commercial ties with countries in the Middle East that are trying to modernize and give their people long-term economic opportunities and political rights. The United States should be a catalyst for economic growth and stability in the region and an active supporter and partner of countries, such as Oman, that are seeking to integrate into the global trading community. Oman has been a solid ally in our efforts in the Middle East and in the war on terror, and we need to demonstrate to all countries that our allies in this effort have a reliable friend in the United States as they seek a better economic future.

Second, Article 21.2 of the U.S.-Oman FTA provides for a national security exception that allows the United States to take measures that we determine are necessary for the protection of our essential security interests.

Foreign acquisitions of companies in the United States that operate port terminals are subject to section 721 of the Defense Production Act, the Exon-Florio amendment, which authorizes the President to block and/or force divestment of any proposed or ongoing foreign investment in the United States that threatens to impair U.S. national security. The Exon-Florio Amendment falls within the national security exception, noted above, as a provision that the United States ''considers necessary for . . . the protection of its own essential security interests.''

Port security in our country is not managed by port terminal operators. A combination of municipal and State port authorities, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard are responsible for our Nation's port security.

As the Secretary of the Treasury, it is my responsibility to ensure the Exon-Florio amendment is executed. Protection of the national security is my highest responsibility. To be clear, the FTA negotiated with Oman neither subjects national security interests to a third-party tribunal's assessment—as some have alleged—nor does it alter, amend, or adjust the President's Exon-Florio statutory powers to protect the Nation's security in any way.

The FTA with Oman provides greater opportunities and opens new markets for U.S. products, investors, and workers. I urge you and your colleagues to pass the legislation to implement this FTA as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

HENRY M. PAULSON, Jr.,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, I have studied this issue extensively, and so has the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service. And what becomes fairly clear is that there is absolutely no merit to this charge. The Oman FTA provides no new rights to supply port-related services. In fact, as CRS notes, ''The agreement actually places further restrictions on Omani port services, because it makes market access conditional upon equal access for U.S. suppliers.''

The FTA preserves the CFIUS process, and does not interfere with it or in any way weaken it. In addition, the FTA preserves the right of Congress to strengthen the CFIUS process for national security reasons without running afoul of our obligations under the agreement.

Critics have taken shots at the essential security exception and have manufactured a bizarre hypothetical to scare Members into voting against the facts and against our key ally.

The essential security exemption provides complete protection, applying to all investments whether they are subject to the CFIUS process or not. Importantly, no party can appeal the essential security exception. In other words, if the U.S. blocks investment for national security reasons, reasons defined solely by the U.S. itself, then that is the final word. This self-judging standard provides foolproof tools to the U.S. to block investment when it is counter to our national security.

I realize there will be an argument that an entity can somehow set up a shell corporation in Oman and attach itself to the mutually beneficial provisions of the FTA. But even in this situation, the fact remains in any instance, the U.S. can invoke its essential security exception and block investment in the U.S., be it by an Omani company or by a company from any other country with substantial business activity.

We have heard that the WTO might entertain a challenge to this provision. But the fact remains there is no example of the WTO challenging successfully any country's use of this exception. This is purely a red herring. This is empty rhetoric. We need to approve this FTA.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to just clarify the record. Let me assure my friend from Pennsylvania that the efforts by Dubai Port World was real to the port of Baltimore and other ports. This is not a hypothetical.

Let me also assure my colleagues, I heard the same discussion when we were changing corporation laws to help exporters, only to find that we were rejected by international panels. We don't have the unilateral right to make these determinations. We do give that to dispute panels.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD), who has been one of the leaders on fair trade here in this body.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the Oman Free Trade Agreement. I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, if we are really serious about national security, especially given the bipartisan outrage over the Dubai Ports World situation earlier this year, we must reject the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Simply put, foreign tribunals should not determine what is, in fact, a security threat to the United States of America. This provision should not be in this trade agreement. The international trade agreement would require the United States to allow any Omani company to provide landside aspects of U.S. ports activities.

A new CRS report further confirms that a company operating in Oman could use the Oman Free Trade Agreement to obtain this new right guaranteed by the international trade agreement, Dubai-United States ports operations.

Who is to say that al Qaeda would not set up shop in Oman to gain access and control of our ports? We have already seen how they have worked this in the past. They set their men in United States soil years before the September 11 attack to take flight lessons.

They know how the system works. They are strategic in their planning. Do you really think terrorists could not take advantage of this provision? It is bad enough that we are asked to support agreements that will shift more jobs overseas, that undermine our environmental standards, and that ask us to stick our head in the sand over serious human rights violations.

But it is simply unacceptable to ask this Congress to support legislation that could potentially undermine the security of our Nation. At the very least, USTR should exclude the ports from this deal and all future deals.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of one Member of Congress who would support weakening our national security, and this agreement does do that. We should stand united and demand that these free trade agreements start with us negotiating for the best interests of the United States.

We will continue to see more unless we do that today. I urge my colleagues to reject this agreement.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the chairman of the terrorism committee.

Mr. ROYCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. As mentioned, I chair the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation of the International Relations Committee.

There are several reasons to support this agreement. My comments will be focused on viewing this agreement as a means to advance our struggle against terrorism. Our country is facing deep challenges, deeper than most Americans probably realize.

We are in a deadly serious struggle against Islamist terrorism and against its state sponsors. And in this struggle we need all of the friends that we can get. And Oman has been a friend. The fact is that Oman has been helpful in advancing our strategic interests in the Persian Gulf region. We store military equipment there.

Oman has been helpful in combating terrorism. It has checked the flow of money to terrorist organizations, something we need to do more on and with in terms of other Gulf States. Other major countries use trade to advance their strategic interests. I am going to explain for a minute that China is doing this, and China is certainly doing it also all over Africa. I have been in 22 countries in Africa, and I have watched China do this from North Africa to subSaharan Africa.

Fortunately, there we are competing in trade through AGOA, competing for influence. You know elsewhere around the globe, China is competing for access to oil and other strategic resources. They are gaining political friends.

The difference is that China undermines transparency and the rule of law in many countries. But the U.S.-Oman agreement strengthens transparency and the rule of law, which are longstanding American values.

This agreement is good economics. In that sense it is like the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This agreement will increase access to the Oman market for American exporters of agricultural products, health care and engineering services, among others, but it is good strategy too. The 9/11 Commission recommended that we pursue this type of policy.

□ 1300

It is true that the agreement's economic significance is not that large. U.S. trade with Oman will remain modest. But its rejection would set back an important strategic relationship, one that this and previous administrations have done a very good job advancing.

Let's not go that route. I ask my colleagues to support this agreement.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), one of the leading voices on workers' rights.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, we need to get one thing straight here before I start, and that is that those of us who oppose this trade agreement are not against trade, are not against exchange. How dare anybody stand on this floor and refer to the 9/11 Commission's report. Chapter 12. I have read the 9/11 Commission's report, by the way. I think that is a good start.

The 9/11 Commission report, chapter 12, talks about global strategy. If you read the entire chapter and you want to talk about strategy, trade must be part of when we are communicating with other countries. There is no question about it.

For those of us who believe that we need to support this trade deal, this unfair trade deal, and it is going to help workers in Oman, as well as the workers in the United States of America, I don't know what you need to refer to. Because the State Department, our own State Department, says that foreign workers at times were placed in a situation amounting to forced labor in Oman. This deal isn't for workers. This deal is for the few, like most of the trade agreements that we have given into.

We have surrendered our ability, as a branch of the government of this country, under Article I, section 8, that the Congress be in charge of commerce. We have surrendered our ability to be trade negotiators to the executive branch of government.

I have high hopes for Oman and its people. We need more moderate and forward-thinking nations like Oman in the Middle East. We need to look at how much foreign aid we provide to Oman, and even Lebanon, we, who want to help the Lebanese stop Hezbollah, and then we give them $43 million.

I am not against free trade. I am against these free trade agreements which do not benefit the American worker. I am not a protectionist, but I think we should protect the American worker. This agreement may be to the liking of a few wealthy CEOs here in America, it may be to the liking of the Sultan of Oman, but it does not represent the interests of workers in this country. It is time for a new direction in free trades. We need free trade which is modeled around human beings and not around big business interests, because human beings are the ones who drive our economy. They are the ones who will build our partnership with other nations.

We need free trade agreements that enforce the principle of workers' rights. That is right. That is what this debate is all about: will we defend the

rights of workers of Oman, or will we take a step back in the right of all workers to organize freely. This country doesn't recognize the right of workers to organize. We need to defeat this trade agreement.

The proponents of the Oman Free Trade Agreement would have you believe that my colleagues and I who oppose this agreement do so because we are against free trade or maybe because we are against the nation of Oman. Both claims could not be further from the truth.

The fact is that I have high hopes for Oman and its people. We need more moderate and forward-thinking nations like Oman in the Middle East.

In fact we gave Oman only $16.5 million in foreign appropriations, which I think would be a more effective vehicle to build a strong partnership rather than through this flawed free trade agreement.

An example of this is the sad fact that we gave Lebanon only $43.2 million in foreign appropriations, of which only a scant $7.7 million went to military and counterterrorism efforts. Perhaps if we had invested more into Lebanon we could have avoided the deadly situation we are currently witnessing.

Similarly, I am not against free trade, what I am against are these free trade agreements which benefit a few to the detriment of workers. This agreement may be to the liking of a few wealthy CEO's here in America and it may be to the liking of the Sultan of Oman, but it does not represent the interests of the workers here in the United States or in Oman.

My colleagues and I are tired of seeing the same flawed free trade model, time and time again. It is time for a new direction in free trade agreements.

We need free trade agreements that are modeled around human beings and not around big business interests. Because human beings are the ones who drive our economy, they are the ones who will build our partnership with other nations.

We need free trade agreements that enforce the principle of workers rights and the right of all workers to organize freely. Instead of just paying lip service to the problem as this agreement does.

We need free trade agreements that respect our sovereignty and our right to have full control over our critical security infrastructure. Instead this agreement takes us back to the problem we had with the Dubai Ports deal and that is simply unacceptable.

We need free trade agreements that respect environmental concerns, the rights of women and the rights of minorities. . . . I could go on longer, but I think you get my point.

My colleagues and I would be standing here championing this agreement if it met the standards it should, but sadly it does not.

It is time that we have real free trade agreements; it is time that we stand up for the workers here in America and workers throughout the world. I implore you to stand up for them today!

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, in response to my good friend from New Jersey, and also in response to my good friend from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), who asks about, and makes accusations with regard to, the situation in Oman, I should remind them that there were 33 strikes in 2004, more than 6,000 workers went on strike. Strikes continue to this day with no repressive tactics, no government reprisals.

And the Omani Government has representatives of the International Labor Organization on the ground in Oman working with them to develop more and stronger standards.

Mr. PASCRELL. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I will shortly. I am about out of time. If you can refute that, I will yield 15 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you. Do you deny that the State Department has put us on alert as to how workers are treated, foreign workers particularly, in Oman, that they are forced to work? Are you denying that State Department report?

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Yes, I am, because the fact that a government takes your passport, any number of governments do that. The German Government used to do it. I don't know if they do it now. That doesn't mean that is forced labor. They hold your passport, but that doesn't mean that you can't get it when you want to leave the country.

But the fact is that now the decree has been issued, and that tactic cannot be used.

Mr. PASCRELL. It is used.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. It is no longer legal to use such a tactic. It is not used. That is the kind of progress we are wanting to achieve, and I thank Mr. PASCRELL's help in achieving that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS).

Mr. MEEKS of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, initially it was not my intent to come discuss this bill on the floor, but last night we were into a serious debate, a serious debate about Israel and its right to defend itself, and we talked about Hezbollah and Hamas and how they were not for peace and how they were for destruction.

I at that time took the floor, because I agreed with that significance of Israel defending itself, and here, on the very next day, as I was listening to the debate, we have a country that has come a mighty long way in a short period of time. We have a country that says they want peace, and they have exhibited the fact that they want to live in peace. They have been a strong ally to us. I have a letter from AIPAC indicating that they don't have any objection to this.

What kind of message are we sending to one of the most important areas, and volatile areas, in this world? Here we have an Arab country, a moderate Arab country, a country, as we say oftentimes, we are not against them, we are not against people who happen to be Muslim, et cetera, but they are doing everything we have asked of them.

The Sultan came in with a decree because he wanted to make sure we had a bipartisan debate. He didn't want anything to be divided Democrat or Republican. The Sultan said, I am going to live up to my word, giving us all of the indications that they are going to do the right thing.

I know I heard in this debate some say, well, there is no agreement that it happened where there is a promise before the vote on the bill. I just thought to myself, I said, that is not true. Because I know in this bill, as in other bills, IP protections, there is a lot that has to take place and laws that have to be changed after this bill has been passed.

We did it in Bahrain. I have a letter right here that was signed by Rob Portman at the time saying, basically, that we want to make sure that Bahrain, and this was a commitment letter and a clarification letter, saying that after the bill was passed that they would do certain things in their law. That is no different, no different, than what's in this bill.

So I say we have got to do what is right. If it was right, and we sent the right message to Bahrain, it has got to be right and we send the right message to Oman. This is a small country. It is not going to have a heavy impact on the United States of America. It is not going to make a difference to John Q. Public and the United States of America with reference to jobs, but it can make a difference with reference to the message that we are sending to the Arab world and to peace across this globe. It sends a huge message, and I will support this free trade agreement.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

I would like to, before I yield the floor to him, point out that my friend from Maryland brought up the United Arab Emirates debacle that he and I both opposed very much. We don't have a free trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates, so a free trade agreement in no way facilitated that action.

I now yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, what this is about is finding peace and security in the world. The future of peace and security in the world largely rests upon the future of peace and security in the Middle East. The question is what we are as Americans going to do to help Middle Eastern countries, moderate Middle Eastern countries, be more open, be more fair, be more free, be more democratic, be more peaceful. This agreement does that.

Now, for one reason or another, Members here, I believe, have decided to oppose this agreement and then look for reasons to justify that opposition. They have raised two big red herrings, labor and ports. We asked the Congressional Research Service to look at this port issue, to look at this red herring issue.

I want to read from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service that did two studies this month on this issue. Upon close inspection of the language in this agreement, it appears that this claim is misleading because it appears that Omani companies are already presently able to perform these port services. Phrased another way, the United States has reserved the right to maintain our existing legal restrictions with respect to those aspects of maritime transportation in which we already have limitations, as well as adopt new measures in these categories that may be more restrictive.

In some ways, it imposes new opposition and new restrictions that don't currently exist with respect to management of ports.

In conclusion, report number two: while it is theoretically possible for Oman to bring a legal challenge to the actions of the United States before a third-party tribunal, the United States would appear to be on solid legal grounds for asserting not only that the panel does not have the legal authority to determine the validity of such a matter, but also that the inconsistent measure is permitted and justifiable, given the broad self-judging language of the national security exemption.

This means we decide unilaterally, we decide if any of these transactions are not in our national security interest, it doesn't happen. There is nothing the WTO can do about that.

Now, what about labor? This is another agreement that we have had, the labor standard invoked. This is the strongest labor agreement of any trade agreement we have brought to the floor in this Congress and in previous Congresses.

Now, in an effort to be bipartisan, in an effort to work with the other side of the aisle, we have had an exchange of letters and agreements between the Omanis, Democrats and our government USTR.

In November 2005, the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee asked Oman to clarify six areas of law and asked for nine concessions in labor law. In January, Oman responded in detail to all of those concerns. In February 2006, the Democrats forwarded another set of demands and questions, raising new issues. In March, in response to those concerns, Oman made eight commitments to the United States and agreed to enact all of these reforms.

It goes on and on: new demands being requested, new demands being met, to the point where the Omanis have, by decree, already implemented many of these higher labor standards. Any of those that they didn't already decree just a couple of weeks ago, they have promised to put them into law by October 30.

What did we do with Bahrain? With Bahrain they promised to introduce legislation to raise their labor standards.

□ 1315

That was the Bahrain standard. With Oman, no, they did not promise to implement legislation. They promised to implement law by a date certain this year.

So we have increased labor standards. We have put into place core ILO standards. We are rising the tide, but what it all gets down to is this.

Because of this agreement, the Omanis are raising labor standards for their workers. Because of this agreement, Omanis are making their country more free and more transparent for their people. Because of this agreement, we are saying thank you to an ally. Let us continue to move toward peace and prosperity.

Why do I care so much about this? Because I do not want my kids to face the war on terror that we are facing right now. And how do we do that? We do that by making sure that these countries, from which many terrorists come, have opportunities for their young people.

I do not want a young person, the next generation, growing up in tyrannical dictatorships susceptible to the whims of al Qaeda, appealing to the madrassas. I want young people in these countries growing up, reaching their dreams, reaching their potential, having freedom, having the ability to determine where they want to go with their lives, being creative, being able to channel their energy in a positive direction so our children do not have to face this war or on terror.

We must pass this trade agreement because it is vital to our national security interests.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds just to point out to my friend that under this agreement, we now give third-party tribunals the opportunity to second-guess us on national security, and that was not there before this agreement. I offered an amendment to eliminate that. It should have been made in order.

Then regards labor standards in Bahrain, they had on the ground operating ILO standards. We do not have that in Oman.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my good friend from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, one of our real leaders on trade issues.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CARDIN and I appreciate this time.

I wanted to come and speak on this because I voted against this agreement on the Ways and Means Committee when it was reported out a couple, 3 weeks ago. I did so out of sheer frustration and exasperation with the lack of democratic process in the committee as it relates to these agreements.

Those of us who philosophically want to support agreement, engagement, with the rest of the world have had a very, very difficult time in the committee. And to call the committee, the way it has been run recently in some of these, the democratic process is really an abomination of that word.

But beyond that, regardless of one's personal feelings, regardless of how one views the way these bills have come to the floor from that committee, one has to determine for one's self what is in the best interests of the United States of America.

I have determined because history, if history teaches anything, it teaches one that engagement is better than nonengagement, and economic partners eventually become political and military partners.

So the geopolitical aspects of these trade agreements, while they are not that big in scheme of things with respect to trade itself, are very huge, and some of these other speakers have alluded to that, in terms of our role in the world and fostering all the things and values we hold dear.

I cannot see how turning down this agreement today on the floor is going to further our ability to influence things for the better in Oman or, for that matter, in that part of the world or, for that matter, in our own country.

And so for those reasons, even though I have made my feelings known about the way some of these are handled procedurally, I am going to support this agreement today. I think it is in the best interest of this country to do so, for a whole host of reasons, many of which you will hear.

I unfortunately talk so slow I do not have time to go through all of the reasons why I think that it is better on balance than it is worse on balance, and why; therefore, as one weighs what one should do for one's country in this regard, one has to make the decision yes or no. I have made that decision, and I intend to support it, and I would urge other Members to take a look at it.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is left on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) has 36 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, under those circumstances, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

(Mr. KOLBE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding the time, and I am pleased today to rise in strong support of this agreement, the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

With the Doha Round of multilateral talks teetering on the brink of collapse, we need more than ever to pursue a bilateral trade agenda that makes some real gains for American workers and American consumers who, after all, are one and the same. That is

precisely what the Oman Free Trade Agreement does.

The Oman FTA is quite simply a win-win. In 2005, trade between the United States and Oman exceeded $1 billion. The U.S. exported $594 million in goods alone to Oman last year. While some will stand here today, beat their breasts and claim that we are going to lose jobs with this trade agreement, nothing could be further from the truth.

I ask Members to think back to economics 101. Exporting goods creates jobs here at home, and importing goods will create jobs. Consumer and industrial goods will be 100 percent duty free on day one of the trade agreement's entry into force. There will be significant gains in the agriculture and service sectors. These are the kinds of tangible changes we want and we need to bring home to our constituents.

Liberalization of trade in services is sometimes overlooked, but it is absolutely essential to keeping our economy competitive. The services sector represents 75 percent of our country's economic output and it is 80 percent of our workforce. U.S. firms have a strong advantage in the services sector, and it becomes even stronger as we add each country like Oman to an FTA.

But the economic gains are relatively small compared to the impact that a trade agreement with Oman will have in keeping Americans safe. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission recommended a comprehensive strategy to defeat terrorism, that includes economic policies, that encourages development, more open societies and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families.

As a result of this recommendation, the administration authorized negotiations with Oman as part of the plan to create a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013. This is a step in that direction, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this free trade agreement.

Oman leads the Persian Gulf in establishing trade and other ties with Israel. It has eliminated all aspects of its boycott with Israel and when Oman acceded to the WTO in 2000, it did not request an exemption for Israel that would allow it to maintain a boycott. This is a rare exception in a tough neighborhood. I ask my colleagues today to join me in showing our commitment to Oman, is a steadfast ally in a region of the world where we need all the friends we can get.

Vote for the Oman Free Trade Pact.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), a member of the Ways and Means Committee, who has been extremely active on fair trade and international issues.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I hate to say it but I think it has become very obvious that our system for devising trade agreements, so very important to this country's functioning around the world, has not only broken, but it has broken completely.

Today, we have a trade regime which has led to the largest trade deficits this country has ever experienced. The latest report is that the trade deficit for the month of May was almost $64 billion. We purchased $64 billion more in goods than we were able to sell to others around the world.

We are on pace this year to have a trade deficit that is larger than $800 billion. We have never faced that before, but we continue to put forward trade agreements like these that leave us naked to competition that is neither free nor fair.

Today, Mr. Speaker, you find that for every six ships that China sends laden with goods from China into this country, only one of those six ships returns to China with American goods in it for Chinese purchase. And we continue to bring forward trade deals like these that say simply this when it comes to protecting the rights of workers, whether in this country or in the country that we are reaching an agreement with: Enforce your own laws. And even though we know in most cases many of the countries, including Oman, do not have laws that protect their workers, which means that our workers will suffer as well, we continue to move forward with these agreements.

Yet, if you are not convinced that these trade agreements and the regime itself now that we use is broken, look at the provision that was included in the agreement that allows a company that has substantial business in Oman to operate our ports. We dealt with this issue with the Dubai Ports World issue. We rejected that opportunity for a Dubai company to come in and run our ports. Yet in this agreement we have something that would allow that to happen.

I know many of my friends on the Republican side say that will never happen, we have got the national security, essential security interests protection exemption. Then why is it in the agreement in the first place? What you do is you set us up to go before a trade dispute resolution panel that is not ours. It is not our courts that will decide. It will be some other body.

We have now today a system that has led to these large trade deficits, and they continue to come forward. It is time for a change. We need a new direction when it comes to our trade policy. It is broken in this Congress the way we deal with our trade. Not only for our workers, but also for the health of our American companies that have to compete in this world, where artificially other companies in other countries are gaining advantage over us because they are not following the rules.

This is another example of why we should reject trade agreements that do not protect America's interests, whether security-wise or otherwise. Vote against this trade deal.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, in the first place it is not some other panel. It is the U.S. and Oman, and we have the right to determine what is in our security, but having said that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Very briefly in reply to the last speaker, the facts contradict the information that was put out here on the floor regarding the deficit.

The United States' exports to Jordan are up 90 percent since the free trade agreement; up 92 percent to Chile since 2003; up 25 percent to Singapore since 2003; up 11 percent to Australia since 2004; up 7½ percent to Morocco. Under NAFTA, our exports have increased at 133 percent. That just does not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), a member of the Ways and Means Committee who has been articulate and a leader on fair trade and international rights.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by responding to Mr. SHAW's comments. None of the modest steps he cited respond to the fact that we have an $800 billion trade deficit and an Administration with a trade policy that will do nothing but make it worse.

This agreement with a small but strategically important country like Oman ought to have been approved today unanimously, and it could have been. But there is a very big problem, and that problem is not in Oman on the other side of the world; it is on Pennsylvania, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, to be more precise.

The problem is that just as this Administration has shown consistent disdain for the rights and needs of workers in America, just as it has shown consistent disdain for environmental protection—ready to manipulate science whenever it needs to for political purposes to justify degradation of our air, our water, and our other environmental resources—today it shows continued disdain for the environment and for workers in our international trade agreements.

What we need is a modern, bipartisan trade policy that recognizes that you cannot measure how good your trade policy is based solely on how many dollars in goods transverse international borders. You have to consider the impact of that trade on the workers that produce the goods and on the environment that surrounds them.

□ 1330

During the consideration of this bill in the Ways and Means Committee, we offered very modest amendments to try to address these concerns. On upholding international labor standards and on an amendment that I offered to prevent trade in endangered species, the Committee and the Administration would have none of it because if they showed basic dignity and respect for workers and the environment with

Oman, a small country, they might have to do it everywhere, maybe even here in America. You can tell the level of the Administration commitment by the level of enforcement remedies that they provide for the environment and for workers. Then enforcement mechanism in this agreement amounts to less than giving only a traffic ticket to the repeat offender of the most egregious abuse. You pay a fine to yourself—that is the great remedy that they offer.

So today they must, as has been done so often on so many issues, raise the specter of 9/11 and the war on terrorism. How many times has that threat been misused in this building and down the street on Pennsylvania Avenue to debase the most basic and fundamental values that make this a unique country?

It is pulled out again today. It is an issue here, as the Gentleman from Maryland has indicated, because they plan to transfer the issue of port security from this body to an unaccountable, international tribunal that will be empowered to decide whether or not we can restrict foreign acquisition of American ports.

This Administration stood by and encouraged a sellout of our port security once before, and under this agreement they can transfer all responsibility to an unaccountable international tribunal.

Because this agreement fails to adequately respect the needs of American workers and the needs of the environment around the world, it ought to be rejected.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California, a strong advocate of fair trade, Representative SOLIS.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I also want to register my strong opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

As I see it, it is a flawed trade policy, largely to blame for the loss of so many jobs because of the various trade deals we have had. Three million manufacturing jobs have been lost over the last few years. In the last 4 years, our deficit has increased by $725 billion. Trade deficit, $725 billion.

Not only does this particular trade agreement turn its back on American workers, but it endorses the race to the bottom by allowing Oman to continue to ignore labor unions, discrimination against women in the workplace, and excludes guest workers from even minimal worker protections.

If shipping jobs overseas and encouraging discrimination isn't bad enough, this agreement would also allow foreign firms to acquire and operate important national security assets in the U.S. Our only recourse would be at an international court.

Mr. Speaker, supporters of this agreement argue that they are trying to spread democracy and stability around the world. But democracy and stability can't be achieved by trade agreements such as this which ignore the rights and freedoms that are inherent in the fabric of a free society.

I urge a strong ''no'' vote on the Oman Free Trade Agreement, and let's make a priority to help our economy and our workers here before we start selling short our jobs and many of our manufacturing corporations to foreign countries.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of Chairman SHAW as we try to open new markets around the world for American products and services.

I strongly support this agreement with Oman. As you know, America is so open to other countries selling their products and goods into America, but oftentimes when we go around the world, we find that their markets are not so open. And so we try to open those markets through trade agreements to allow our farmers, our small businesses, our manufacturers, our banks, everyone, to sell our products around the world, and these trade agreements are succeeding in doing that.

In each one that we have had, our sales in those countries have nearly doubled. So we are creating jobs here at home selling more products. This free trade agreement does the same thing. It is not huge, but for those who are selling to them, it is very important.

Not only does this help America, but this is an important cog in our Middle East free trade agreement, which is key, because I think that a lot of unrest is caused when people don't have hope, when they don't have a chance to better themselves, when they don't have a high standard of living. The more we are able to create job opportunities and hope in the Middle East, I think the sooner we do that the safer we will have that region. This won't do it by itself, but everything helps move that peace process along.

And I support it because Oman, while it may not be where we want it to be on labor yet, they have made tremendous progress in labor issues and in the rule of law and in a number of areas that we ought to be supporting as a country.

Let me conclude with this. This agreement stands on itself, but there is more than that. I have a soft spot for countries that have come to the aid of our American soldiers. My baby brother has served in Iraq as an Army medic and is now a sergeant major and has just returned from his tour in Iraq. Recently I just attended two funerals of local soldiers who died defending us. When we have countries like Oman who allow our personnel to stop there, our aircraft to fly there and land there, when we have a country like this that houses our personnel, basically makes them safer while they are away from their families trying to defend our freedom, I think we ought to reward these countries.

To me on national security when I see this intellectually dishonest argument about our port security, what I am afraid of is we have people who want to punish the countries that are helping our soldiers, punishing countries who are coming to help our men and women who are trying to fight for our freedom. We ought to be rewarding and thanking those countries. I support this agreement.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) who has been one of our leaders on fair trade.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, as a cochair of the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus, I rise today in strong opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

The Oman FTA contains no effective mechanisms to enforce labor or human rights laws. Instead, this agreement relies on the empty promises that Oman will enforce its own labor laws.

If we accept this deal, we are saying to foreign countries: It is okay to force labor among three-fourths of your workers.

We are telling them it is okay to deny workers the right to organize for safer working conditions and better wages.

If we accept this deal, we turn a blind eye to poor working conditions and organized human trafficking to fill sweat shops.

I would remind my colleagues that the terms and conditions of trade agreements determine what is and is not acceptable.

Let me be clear. If we agree to a deal that does not live up to basic labor and human rights standards, then we are deliberately establishing a lower standard for worker rights in this country and around the world. We should be setting a fair trade standard that allows the benefits of commerce to raise and not lower standards for everyone. Vote ''no'' on Oman FTA.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) who has been one of the leading spokespersons about international human rights and worker rights.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much and for all of his work on these issues.

Make no mistake about it, this vote is not just a vote as to whether or not you support free trade. This is also an up-or-down vote on whether or not you support our national security and our homeland security.

Just 5 months ago, the Bush administration tried to ram through an approval of the sale of U.S. port operations to Dubai Ports World, a company owned and operated by the Government of the United Arab Emirates.

The President said he would veto any attempt to strike down the deal. But in the face of tremendous opposition on the grounds of homeland security by the Democrats and even some Republicans, the deal was scuttled.

The whole episode shined a bright light on the little-known committee at the Treasury Department and the secretiveness of a process it uses to make decisions that can have important consequences for the security of our Nation, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. It is called CFIUS.

In this post 9/11 world, we simply cannot trust, as this free trade agreement requires us to do, that the businesses and Government of Oman are pure and will not sabotage, abuse, or misuse critical infrastructure they decide to buy in a business deal fast-tracked by this agreement. We must trust, but verify, when it comes to any foreign government-owned entity buying critical infrastructure in the United States.

Now the President and his administration did not give the Dubai Ports deal the scrutiny it deserved, even though the 9/11 Commission identified the Government of the UAE as a ''persistent counterterrorism problem.'' And so that should shine a light on this deal as well.

We know our seaports, airports and other critical infrastructure are at the very top of the al Qaeda terrorist target list. Let us not give them this additional hand that the treaty will require in penetrating the operations of those critical targets as fast-tracking business deals in the name of free trade will have on the security of our country. Let us not let commerce trump common sense.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Make no mistake, this vote is not a vote on whether or not you support free trade. This is an up and down vote on whether or not you support our national and homeland security.

Just 5 short months ago, the Bush Administration tried to ram through an approval of the sale of U.S. port operations to Dubai Ports World, a company owned and operated by the government of the United Arab Emirates, UAE.

The whole episode shined a bright light on a little-known committee at the Treasury Department and the secretive process it uses to make decisions that can have important consequences for the security of our Nation.

But in this post 9–11 world, we cannot simply trust, as this free trade agreement requires us to do, that the businesses and government of Oman are pure and will not sabatoge, abuse, or misuse critical infrastructure they decide to buy in a business deal fast-tracked by this agreement. We must trust, but verify, when it comes to ANY foreign government-owned entity buying critical infrastructure in the United States.

The President and his administration did not give the Dubai Ports deal the scrutiny it deserved, even though the 9–11 Commission identified the government of the UAE as a "persistent counterterrorism problem." The UAE was a key transfer point for illegal shipments of nuclear components to Iran, North Korea and Libya. The UAE was one of only three nations to recognize the legitimacy of the Taliban government and still does not recognize the State of Israel.

We know that our seaports, airports, and other critical infrastructure are at the very top of Al Qaeda's terrorist target list. Let's not give them a hand in penetrating the operations of those critical targets by fast-tracking business deals in the name of a free trade deal that has no protections for our national and homeland security. Commerce must not be permitted to trump common-sense.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire of my friend from Florida, his continuing to reserve, does that mean he has one speaker remaining?

Mr. SHAW. Unless someone else comes to the floor, I will be the final speaker and close.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. And I am reserving because I have so little time left, as the gentleman knows, so I am trying to be strategic with my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 6 minutes to our distinguished whip, my colleague from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), who has been a spokesperson not only on trade but on security internationally.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank Mr. SHAW and Mr. CARDIN for proceeding on this debate, as well as Mr. MORAN. I think I have voted with all three of them on various different occasions.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a strong advocate for free trade and open markets. I believe strongly that American businesses and workers can compete and win in the global economy.

Increasing global interdependence is a reality in the 21st century, and it presents our Nation with an opportunity to promote democratic reform, the rule of law, and respect for basic human rights.

It is incumbent, however, upon us to foster global trade, to engage our partners in a system based on rules and law, and to work to raise the living standards of working men and women; and not to recoil from the rest of the world.

Philosophically, I count myself a proponent, a strong proponent of free trade, and have voted for many of the trade agreements that have come before this House.

This agreement, I think, is relatively insignificant as it relates to trade and the volume of trade and the impact on our domestic economy. It may have a much more substantial impact, obviously, on the Oman economy. But in terms of our own economy, it will have, I think, relatively little impact.

However, the Oman Free Trade Agreement I believe is flawed, and it undermines fundamental worker rights. Thus, I intend to oppose it.

What this debate, from my perspective, is about is the criteria that we will tell the world is necessary for us to enter into agreements with them. In many respects, as I understand it, those trading partners with whom we might enter into agreements are not in opposition to that which we are seeking. In fact, it is my understanding that there are Members of this Congress and members of the administration far more opposed to the issues that I will discuss than are the partners who enter into agreements with us.

Oman today does not meet the five basic International Labor Organization standards, including the rights of association and collective bargaining, bans on child labor, slave labor, and discrimination in employment. They say they are going to meet those, but they have not yet met them.

Americans, I believe, feel very strongly about all of those provisions in our own domestic law and in international law.

□ 1345

And it seems to me appropriate that we pursue agreements in that context. There are no labor unions in Oman today. The only labor organizations are, essentially, management labor committees. And while 70 percent of workers in Oman are expatriates, there is little, if any, participation by foreign workers in administering such committees. In other words, most of the workers are from outside of Oman. But almost all of those who participate in any kind of discussions with reference to labor issues are within Oman, Omani citizens.

For 8 months Oman has failed to take a number of steps to ensure that its practices immediately comply with ILO standards and to bind those commitments under the agreement, as was done by Bahrain last year.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Research Service confirmed just yesterday that the trade agreement would make it more difficult to protect U.S. ports and block a takeover by foreign government-owned companies such as Dubai Ports World. That raised a tremendous amount of concern just recently when the CFIUS process did not work as we thought it ought to.

It is regrettable that Republicans on the Rules Committee rejected amendments offered by my good friend, Congressman CARDIN, that would have closed this loophole, and it would have at least subjected it to full and fair debate. These are serious issues, and they should be debated fully and fairly. The Rules Committee, however, failed to give us that opportunity. It would have, indeed, insured compliance with ILO standards as well before this agreement goes into effect. But that amendment was not made in order.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, there is no reason that we cannot negotiate agreements that advance the cause of free trade, promote the rule of law, generate economic development of countries in great need, and extend to workers, farmers, and businesses the advantages of expanded trade to new

markets. None. This flawed agreement, however, fails to accomplish those objectives.

For that reason, so that we can set a benchmark for future, much more consequential trade agreements for our country, I believe today the Congress of the United States ought to set that benchmark and say to the administration, say to the USTR, and say to those with whom we will negotiate in the future for trade agreements that this is the essential element of our agreement because we believe, this country believes that as we want to lift our own workers, as we want to lift our own trade viability, and as we want to lift the viability of trade of other countries, we also want to ensure that we lift workers in that process.

That is the right thing to do. It is the best thing to do. It is the best policy thing to do, and therefore, I will oppose this agreement, but hope that as agreements come before us in the future, that I will be able to support them in the best interest of our country.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, we have another speaker who just came to the floor, Mr. HENSARLING of Texas, to whom I yield 2 minutes. Following that, I would yield to the minority so they can close, and then we will go to closing.

Mr. CARDIN. If the gentleman would just yield briefly. I would let Mr. MORAN use up the remainder of his time, and then we will use up the remainder of our time, and then you will close.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, trade with Oman represents four one-hundredths of 1 percent of our Nation's trade. Thus, we are clearly not debating the American economy today. Instead, we are debating whether or not we are a Nation of trade or a Nation of protectionism, and we are debating whether or not we will support or repudiate an ally in the war on terror.

Free trade delivers a greater choice of goods and services to American consumers at lower prices. That means families can buy more using less of their paychecks. More trade means more competition, and competition has always helped the consumer.

Mr. Speaker, we have 230 years of experience now to show it. But beyond all the obvious economic benefits of free trade, we must recognize that trade is fundamentally an issue of personal freedom. Nations do not trade with nations. People trade with people. And with the exception of national security considerations, every American citizen should have the right to determine the origin of the goods and services they want to purchase.

Now, maybe we, in Congress, have the power, but do we have the right to tell Americans they cannot buy less expensive goods for their families from other nations? The answer should be a resounding no.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement will also improve the national security of the U.S. In the recent 9/11 Commission, they recommended that the U.S. pursue policies to promote more open and freer societies to defeat the root causes of terrorism. That means trade. A free trade agreement with Oman will do just that, which is critical to our current situation in the Middle East.

The nation of Oman has been a friend of the U.S. for over 170 years. They have been a valuable ally during the Cold War, as well as aiding us in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. They continue to be an important ally in the global war on terror, having taken a very strong stand against Islamic extremism that begets terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, for over 200 years America has benefited from free trade and competition. I urge my colleagues to once again reject raw protectionism and partisanship and instead stand for freedom and security and support the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, with what little time I have left, to recapitulate what has been said in this debate. In the first place, there is no dis agreement that Oman is located in a highly strategic area, right at the Strait of Hormuz. More than 20 percent of all the world's oil supply goes through there. It is right across the strait from Iran. Very critical position.

It has also been completely agreed that Oman has been a principal ally to the United States. Everything we have asked them to do since 1833, 173 years, Oman has stood up there in a very difficult part of the world and said to the world ''We are America's ally.''

When we asked Oman for a military agreement so we could stage troops and provide logistical support in the Persian Gulf War, and now in the Iraq war, they said, ''Yes, you can do that and we will protect them.'' And they have all been protected. Our troops have never had a problem in using Oman. Oman has come under pressure, but they have protected American troops in every possible way. No disagreement.

We all agree that almost two-thirds of Oman's population is under the age of 18, so we know that Oman is entering a period of unstability unless there is economic opportunity.

We also know that while there isn't a whole lot of trade, what Oman is buying from us generates jobs in the United States. We get oil from Oman in return.

So what is at dispute is whether this is a national security threat and whether this is an issue with regard to labor rights. Well, in the first place, with regard to national security, there is no question, according to the Congressional Research Service, that if there is a national security issue that the United States raises, that that trumps everything else. And these panels that my friends and colleagues have been referring to, these are panels of American and Omani negotiators, and if an American negotiator says, we think this is a security interest, it is dead. The language that is in contention is reciprocal language we wanted because we have U.S. companies who would like possibly to buy port facilities there. That was our doing. But it can be preempted by national security concerns.

So, on national security, the Congressional Research Service tells us that there is not a security threat. CFIUS will determine if foreign investment in U.S. parts is a security threat and can block the purchase if it comes to that. But there is not going to be any international panel second-guessing this determination, let alone overruling it.

Now, in terms of labor, we passed a Bahrain trade agreement a short while ago, almost by voice vote. No discussion. The labor guarantees in that agreement were not nearly as strong as the ones in this agreement. This is the strongest labor agreement we have seen.

Now, it may not be completely to my liking, but, you know, every one of the issues that the Ways and Means Democrats raised have been addressed by the Sultan of Oman, and not like Bahrain, where they said, well, we will put these to Parliament for consideration and pass them. Oman accepted every one of these recommendations, and you can check again with the Omani Ambassador, who happens to be a woman, the only female ambassador from an Arab country. And of course they were the first Arab nation to send an ambassador to the United States, incidentally.

But every Ways and Means Democrat's recommendation the Sultan put in the decree. This is law now. They can continue to collective bargain. They're are going to protect workers' rights. There will be no repercussions. They are going to eliminate any forced labor, if you can find it. And, in fact, they have invited the International Labor Organization personnel, ILO professionals to Oman, and they are working with them on the ground as we speak. And by October 31, they are going to put all these protections into law, anything that hasn't been fully implemented by the decree by the Sultan.

I don't know what more they can do. They have done everything we have asked.

This is a good trade agreement and, it is in the interest of the United States to pass it. I hope this body will.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, before I yield the balance of our time to our distinguished leader, let me just make it clear that the Sultan has not, by decree, answered the issues that were raised in letters that were sent by our staff. In fact, they dealt with primarily one issue, and six or seven are yet to be dealt with; and that is why they are setting an October date for changing their law.

And let me also make it clear that unlike Bahrain, the Omanis have not, on the ground, changed their labor practices to meet ILO standards. So they fall far short of Bahrain.

And lastly, on the security issue, I have heard our colleagues put a lot of confidence in our ability to unilaterally use the essential security provision to prevent action on our ports. And I just wonder what attitude we would have if one of our insurance companies, for example, wanted to do business in Oman, and Oman said, oh, no, not because of essential security we will let you in our country. And then we say we don't have the right to challenge that? We clearly have the right to challenge that, as Oman would have the right to challenge our decision to invoke this exception if a company wanted to take over a port operation in the United States.

And we are going to be subject to the second-guessing of independent tribunals. And our record has been terrible in the decisions of the tribunal as to how many we have lost against statements made in this body that said that what we would do would stand international muster, and it did not.

So why are we putting this threat out there? Why are we making ourselves vulnerable? Why didn't we take it out of the agreement? Why do we want to subject America to that risk?

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield the balance of our time to our distinguished leader who has put forward an agenda for America that truly will make this Nation a safer Nation, Ms. PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding and for his just relentless championing of the rights of American workers. Who are we here for, after all?

Mr. CARDIN has been a supporter of free trade agreements for a long time, and that doesn't mean that you can't do that and also be here to be the voice of American workers. If any of them tune in and listen to this debate on the floor, they know clearly who speaks for them. Thank you, Mr. CARDIN, for championing this issue.

Thank you, Mr. RANGEL, for your incredible leadership, time and time again to say, yes, we are open, we understand the benefits of free and fair trade. We want them, though, to emphasize the fairness of it to American workers.

□ 1400

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Oman Free Trade Agreement, and it is with the greatest respect for the gentleman from Virginia that I respectfully disagree with his comments. And as Mr. CARDIN has said, the Sultan, with all due respect to the Sultan, his decree has not done what we need to have done in this trade agreement.

Democrats realize that our economic future rests upon our ability to open new markets for U.S. goods and services so that we can continue to capitalize upon the innovative spirit that has long distinguished America. New markets translate into new, high-paying jobs and opportunities for American workers, businesses, and farmers.

In the past, trade policy has been a bipartisan endeavor, a common effort to expand opportunity for America's businesses, again workers and farmers. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has veered in the opposite direction, and so has the Republican leadership in this Congress, and a bipartisan agenda has now become a lofty goal rather than an indisputable reality, which it should be. The Bush administration has failed to enforce fundamental worker rights and failed to open large markets for U.S. goods. Once again America's middle class is paying the price for misplaced Republican priorities.

In addition to that failure, in terms of the global economy, this administration and the Republicans in Congress support incentives to businesses to take jobs offshore. How is that a good idea for America's workers? We are going to engage in these trade agreements that do not have core labor principles in them that lift the standards of the workers in the country; for example, Oman; or, of course, lift the living standard of American workers here, which is our primary responsibility.

And at the same time, these same people who brought you these free trade agreements which do not enforce core labor principles and are unfair to American workers, these same people advocate incentives for companies to take jobs offshore. That is why on the first day of Congress, Mr. RANGEL will come to the floor, God willing, if the Democrats take power, he will come to the floor on the first day and repeal those incentives to companies to take jobs offshore. One small step for American workers.

Democrats have a long history of supporting free and fair trade. Enforceable labor rights that follow basic core principles are a crucial part of ensuring that American companies and workers will not be disadvantaged by unfair competition from countries that do not adhere to the core standards.

Core ILO, International Labor Organization, standards ensure that our trading partners abide by the most fundamental standards of common decency and fairness. Not only are core labor rights a matter of decency and fairness, but they are also in our national economic interest. Basic enforceable, with the emphasis on enforceable, labor protections are critical to building a strong middle class in Oman, raising the disposable incomes so that they can buy American products.

Our trade deficit is likely to exceed last year's recordbreaking deficit of $717 billion. Every day we have $2 billion more in goods coming into the country than going out. This is unbelievable. Over $2 billion more a day in goods and services coming in than going out. I do not know what is free and fair about that. I do know America's middle class is paying the price.

The Republican trade agenda has failed to break new ground by opening large markets for U.S. goods. Instead, they have these little tiny agreements that establish a precedent and erode core labor principles, and they have not opened the large markets that are crucial to creating new jobs for American workers.

Despite a record trade deficit, the Bush administration has focused on negotiating trade agreements with countries where the opportunities for U.S. companies are limited.

The Oman Free Trade Agreement will have negligible impact on our balance of trade, and that is why it can wait. It is just not a big deal. It can wait until these core principles are in the treaty and not just by decree, which they are not, but if they were, could be changed tomorrow. This year U.S. trade with Oman will be about $1 billion, just .04 percent of the total U.S. trade.

Democrats recognize the importance of engaging Oman, but we must do much more in terms of fairness. Democrats are committed to addressing the challenges of increasingly competitive global markets. Our success depends on our ability to innovate new products and to create new markets, new markets, overseas for those goods and services. That is why Democrats have put forth our innovation agenda, our commitment to competitiveness to keep America number one. We will secure America's continued leadership and innovation and unleash the next generation of discovery, invention, and growth. And in that way, we will be preeminent in the world's markets; but not, but not, if our hands are tied by the precedent established by these little agreements.

Again, in addition to our innovation agenda and fairness to American workers, businesses and farmers, on that very first day, in addition to raising the minimum wage, Mr. RANGEL will call for the repeal of incentives of jobs to go overseas.

Just think of it. If you are a middle-income person in middle America, our technological base, our manufacturing base, our industrial base in those parts of the country are eroding. Jobs and services are going overseas with the help of tax incentives of this Republican administration and this Republican Congress, and then we engage in free trade agreements that do not even pay the respect due to American workers to have core labor principles, a minimal standard, the ILO standard. A minimal standard. This is not anything big.

And by the way, we are not asking for anything different for labor, for America's workers. This is not special treatment. What Democrats are asking for is the same thing that the Bush administration is giving to other industries: the right to enforce the provisions. Businesses have that right in the

deal, but workers do not. It is just not fair. It is just not fair.

So we want to take our country in a new direction, passing free trade agreements that do expand our markets, spur economic growth, raise the living standard of the United States and abroad, and have enforceable provisions that are fair to American workers.

Unfortunately, this trade agreement fails on all of these counts, and that is why I ask my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the legislation that is now before this body. Yes, this agreement is a good economic agreement for those doing business in Oman. In fact, it is one of the best free trade agreements that this body has considered, granting the United States some of its broadest market access ever, and establishing a strong standard as we push to open the large, emerging Middle East market through a Middle East Free Trade Area. I am particularly pleased that my home State of Florida will receive duty-free treatment on much of its citrus products.

However, while the economics of United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement are compelling, I believe that there are more important issues for the Members to consider as they cast their votes today. Specifically, what that vote will tell the people of Oman and, perhaps most importantly, the people throughout the violent Middle East as the conflict today threatens to spark a new war.

Mr. MORAN spoke quite eloquently of the dangerous neighborhood that Oman is in, right across the straits from Iran. I was just handed a CNN report that just came out within the last hour in which Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill said that the Iranians were believed to be present at North Korea's July 4 missile test. I wonder why.

As Chairman THOMAS indicated, Oman has long been a strong ally of the United States. Yet beyond that, Oman has also been a leader in its relationships with Israel. Oman has no law that establishes or enforces primary, secondary, or tertiary boycotts of Israel. In the context of congressional consideration of this free trade agreement, Oman has reiterated its commitment to not enforce any aspect of a boycott on Israel in letters of September 28, 2005 and June 15, 2006. Last month, Oman issued an official government document to its relevant agencies, again reiterating the policy and commitment. If any Member still has any doubt, they should know that in the recognition of the importance of this issue by both the United States Trade Representative and the Government of Oman, language was included within the Statement of Administrative Action that the United States Trade Representative will monitor and report to us on this issue. On June 28, 2006, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, known as AIPAC to the Members of Congress, wrote to me in support of the language, and I am pleased with its inclusion and Oman's position on the boycott.

After these repeated assurances and Oman's longstanding record, Member representations that Oman is not fully committed on this issue ignore the facts and are fundamentally disrespectful of one of the greatest allies for peace and against terror in the world. That some Members have maintained these claims and even sent Dear Colleague letters on this issue, after receiving the letter from AIPAC, receiving direct assurances from Oman officials, and seeing the text of the official Omani documents stopping any boycott, is disgraceful, and I believe that Oman deserves an apology.

While Oman's action in this area alone sends a powerful message to this part of the world, Oman actually has a history of going beyond, to actual engagement. After the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, Oman was one of the few Arab countries that did not break off relations with Israel. It was also one of the first countries in the region to host an Israeli Prime Minister, when Prime Minister Rabin visited Oman in 1994.

In its letter to me and to the ranking member of the Trade Subcommittee, AIPAC stated, ''The breakdown of these kinds of economic barriers can, hopefully, help lead to the development of important political relationships between Israel and the Arab world.''

I could not agree more. As we watch hostilities in the Middle East and they continue to worsen, it is through economic relationships such as these that we can have the best chance to win the hearts and minds of the future leaders in the Middle East. As young workers in the region begin to see the benefits of participating in the worldwide economy, they are more likely to pick up tools to better their lives, rather than tools of destruction.

Will passage of this agreement cause an immediate end to hostilities in Israel, Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, or Afghanistan? No. But none other than the 9/11 Commission has specifically highlighted the importance of Middle East free trade agreements in fighting terror. The free trade agreement will continue to undermine the arguments that terrorists use in recruiting. With increased economic opportunities will come an increased incentive to remain a peaceful, active participant in society.

Oman has been a leader in this region in its friendship with the United States, its friendship with Israel, its commitment to political and labor reforms, and its desire to work economically with the United States. It is now up to the Members of the House of Representatives whether to reward the leadership or reject it based on politics and arguments that have no basis in fact.

Let me run through a few of the arguments that have been made here today. We have talked about American workers.

□ 1415

The United States International Trade Commission estimates that the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement would have almost no effect on U.S. imports from Oman, while resulting in a 5 to 14 percent increase in U.S. exports to Oman. Are you for the American worker? Then you are for increased American exports.

We have heard people trashing the labor standards. I heard one of the speakers complain that the management was one of the union representatives. Well, we keep talking about labor relations in this body. One of those provisions provides that management shall be part of the unions, and the managers that were participating in those negotiations were elected by the workers. Are you as Members of Congress going to tell them they can't have their own elected representatives? I don't think so. And whether it be management or the guy on the assembly line, that is what they want and that is what they should have.

We have also heard a lot about port security. The United Arab Emirates does not have a free trade agreement with us, so the problems that we opposed with regard to that did not come out of any particular agreement. As a matter of fact, with Oman, as it is now, without a free trade agreement, it is exactly the same as United Arab Emirates.

But let me read something from the agreement. You don't have to take my word for it. This is what the agreement says. 21.2 says: ''Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to preclude a party from applying measures that it considers necessary for the fulfillment of its obligations with respect to the maintenance or restoration of international peace or security or the protection of its own essential security interests.''

The Congressional Research Service said: ''Should the United States, whether through CFIUS or congressional action prevent Oman companies from establishing 'landside aspects of port activities,' it would appear that such a measure could be justified pursuant to the essential security exception. While it is theoretically possible for Oman to bring a legal challenge to the actions of the United States before a third-party tribunal, the United States would appear to be on solid legal grounds for asserting not only that the panel does not have the legal authority to determine the validity of such a matter, but also that the inconsistent measure is permitted and justifiable given the broad self-judging,'' self judging, ''language of the national security exception.''

So that national security interest has absolutely no legal standing at all. I know of no legal authority, and I am sure if there was one, that would have been brought out in this debate.

Yesterday, we had a very fine debate, and this debate was about our friendship with Israel. It was about the dangers that Israel is facing. It was about our support of Israel. Now we have another vote today, and that vote is about one of the best friends that Israel has in the region. And for us to vote them down would not only be an insult to them, but I believe would be an insult to Israel.

I would urge all Members of this body to think for yourself, is this a good agreement? Don't follow your party line. Vote for yourself, what you think. You are sent here to represent your constituency. Represent them and cast a vote today that is going to mean something. We aren't puppets around here. Each one of us represents a particular congressional district and we should vote that district. Vote for the people that sent us here.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to the Oman FTA. This is déjà vu: last summer we were working against CAFTA . . . now we have the Oman FTA.

What we have here is identical language to the problematic and inadequate language that was contained in CAFTA and NAFTA before that. Most shocking, the administration has slipped language into the Oman FTA that will threaten U.S. port security. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I represent the Port of Boston. To me, this FTA really hits home and is particularly disturbing.

The simple fact is that under this agreement, if an Omani company sought to acquire landside services at U.S. ports and the U.S. government took action to stop or limit that acquisition, the Omani company could sue the U.S. government for violating its FTA rights. The challenge would then be decided by a U.N. or World Bank tribunal.

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service released a report a couple days ago that confirms that the Oman FTA would make it harder to protect U.S. ports. The CRS report makes clear that the Oman FTA would create a new right under an international trade agreement, which would require the United States to allow any Omani company to provide "landside aspects of port activities."

The CRS report further confirms that Dubai Ports World, DPW, could use the U.S.-Oman FTA to obtain this new right guaranteed by an international trade agreement to buy U.S. port operations. All DPW would have to do is create a subsidiary in Oman. DPW already has commercial operations in at least 10 countries. It would not be hard for DPW to meet the Oman FTA's standard—any business established in Oman is eligible to take advantage of the benefits of the agreement. Only businesses with "no substantial business activities"—a very low threshold—are excluded.

Mr. Speaker, not only does this FTA pose homeland security concerns, but instead of enforceable labor provisions with teeth, this free trade agreement suggests only that Oman adopt and enforce its own labor laws. It offers no assurance that existing labor problems will be resolved, and allows labor laws to be weakened or eliminated in the future, with no possibility of recourse.

In Oman, their 2003 labor laws remain in serious violation of the International Labor Organization's most important and fundamental rights: freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively. There are no independent unions in that country. In fact, Oman not only fails on labor rights, but on all human rights!

The Bush Administration State Department's 2006 "Trafficking in Human Persons" report downgraded Oman to a "Tier 2 Watch List" country, just one step above the countries with the worst human trafficking records. In 2005, Oman was only on "Tier 2" of the State Department's human trafficking list, meaning that Oman's trafficking practices and regulations worsened from 2005 to 2006.

We talk a lot about the war in Iraq, and the President of the United States has described it in many cases as an effort to export democracy. Well, I have got news for you; you do not export democracy through the Defense Department.

This is where you export democracy, in our trade agreements, through our Commerce Department. Democracy is all about opportunity, and we should, in our trade agreements, give these foreign workers an opportunity to stay in their own country, to buy goods from us that would create a good dynamic by creating jobs in this country. Democracy is about opportunity, and if we are really serious about exporting democracy, it starts right here. It starts with our free trade agreements.

Join me in voting "no" on the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. This agreement contains the same flawed "enforce your own labor laws" provision that we have seen in recent trade agreements. These labor standards simply do not work when we are dealing with countries that lack strong labor laws and practices.

Mr. Speaker, before we move forward on this issue, I feel a moral obligation to pose the following questions to my colleagues and to the American people:

When negotiating trade agreements, why does this Administration always seem to lose its tenacity and its resolve when it comes to protecting the labor rights of some of the world's most vulnerable workers?

What message does America send to the international community, when we will fight to protect pharmaceuticals patents and other intellectual property within our trade agreements, but we will not do the same for human beings?

Mr. Speaker, before the Members of the People's House cast their votes on this agreement today, I ask that they take a long, hard look at our priorities and our values when it comes to trade policy. I am convinced that this Administration can do a much better job of negotiating trade agreements that will advance the interests of U.S. business and agriculture, while protecting the rights of workers.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this flawed trade agreement.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 5684, the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. Once again, the Administration has not met its promise to work with both sides of the aisle to craft a fair trade agreement. While I favor expanding trade and eliminating restrictive tariffs and barriers, the U.S.-Oman agreement does not create a fair playing field for United States companies and workers to compete.

Oman is an important ally in the Middle East, and I respect their friendship. However, their labor laws are insufficient to create a level playing field for American companies. At this point, Oman apparently only meets three of the International Labor Organization's five core labor standards. There are no labor unions in Oman, and Oman's workers do not have the right to collectively bargain. Oman's lack of core labor standards alone should be reason enough to oppose the agreement.

Unfortunately, this agreement could also cede our ability to select companies to operate our own ports. As the President learned during the Dubai Ports World controversy just a few months ago, the American people want control over our critical transportation infrastructure, but language in this free trade agreement specifically permits foreign companies to operate our ports as long as the company operates a port in Oman.

In 2005, Rhode Island companies exported approximately $158,000 to Oman, or about .01 percent of the State's worldwide exports. We must go back to the drawing board to ensure American companies, American jobs, and American security are not left behind for such a small price. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 5684 and encouraging the Administration to renegotiate a more equitable agreement.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, after the tragedies of September 2001, the United States Congress created the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, commonly called the 9–11 Commission. This independent, bipartisan body was charged with preparing a complete account of the circumstances surrounding the attacks and with recommending policy changes designed to prevent future attacks. I have a great deal of respect for the individuals who served on this commission and for their final work product.

America is in the midst of fighting a long, complex war against terrorism that must be fought with unconventional tools. The 9–11 Commission recognizes the unique nature of our conflict and has recommended that the United States engage Middle Eastern nations economically in order to foster development and reforms in that troubled part of the world. Economic openness requires bilateral compromise and gives America an opportunity to positively influence the region. And, importantly, economic reforms and political liberties tend to be linked.

In the Middle East, the Congress has approved trade pacts with Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Bahrain. I have supported them because I feel they are critical to enhancing our economic ties to the region. Today, we are considering an agreement with Oman, and after careful consideration, I have decided to support this legislation as well.

Oman is a small, oil-exporting nation located on the Arabian peninsula at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. It is strategically important to the United States and has played a meaningful role in our efforts to defeat terrorism. As Oman's oil reserves diminish, its government has been working to liberalize and diversify its trade beyond oil and gas.

America's economic partnership with Oman carries with it great promise. Boosting our economic partnership with that country will enhance our national security standing in a strategically critical area and will open doors to agricultural trade. The agreement will lower

tariffs on U.S. agricultural commodities and products, thereby putting our Nation in a better position to increase exports and compete with other nations for market share. After full implementation, U.S. agricultural exports could reach $225 million or more.

No trade deal is ever perfect. Clearly, some improvements could be made in the bill, especially with regard to labor protection and human rights. But, as I studied the Oman Free Trade Agreement and heard from national security, agriculture, labor, and business leaders, I became convinced that this trade agreement is critical to U.S. national security and to Missouri's rural economy.

In the days leading up to today's debate on the Oman Free Trade Agreement, there has been much talk about port security. Despite the rhetoric surrounding this issue, a nonpartisan legal analysis from the Congressional Research Service has shown that Congress retains its ability to determine the national security interests of our country and to prevent port operations if need be. The CRS analysis is set forth below, as is a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury on this issue:

CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2006.

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Legal Issues Related to the Proposed Oman Free Trade Agreement and Port Security.

From: Todd B. Tatelman, Legislative Attorney, American Law Division.

This memorandum is in response to requests for a legal analysis of three arguments that have been advanced in opposition to the proposed Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Each of the arguments relate to issues surrounding port security and, specifically, the ability of Omani companies or companies incorporated in Oman to perform ''landside aspects of port activities'' in the United States. This memorandum provides a legal analysis of three questions: First, whether the proposed Oman FTA allows Omani companies or companies incorporated in Oman to perform ''landside aspects of port activities'' at U.S. ports, especially in light of the dispute over Dubai Ports World's attempt at establishing similar business operations at various ports in the United States. Second, whether the proposed Oman FTA provides some type of advance clearance to Omani companies that wish to begin landside port operations in the United States. Finally, this memorandum provides a legal analysis with respect to the possibility of a third-country company (e.g., Dubai Ports World or similarly-situated foreign entity), establishing a minimal presence within Oman for the sole purpose of taking advantage of the benefits provided by the provisions of the proposed FTA.

One argument that has been raised against the proposed Oman FTA appears to stem specifically from language contained in Annex II of the Agreement. The argument generally asserts that the proposed Oman FTA provides a new right to both Omani-owned companies and companies based in Oman that will allow them to perform ''landside aspects of port operations'' at U.S. ports. Upon close inspection of the language in Annex II, however, it appears that this claim is misleading because it appears that Omani companies are already presently able to perform these services. Currently, there are no U.S. laws that prevent either an Omani-owned company (state controlled) or any other foreign-owned company (regardless of whether the company is state-owned or privately owned) from contracting with port owners to perform ''landside aspects of port activities'' in the United States. In other words, if an Omani company (either state or privately owned) wants to engage in contract negotiations with port owners to provide for the types of services envisioned in Annex II, there is no U.S. law that would expressly prevent them from receiving said contracts.

Annex II of the proposed Oman FTA allows the parties to list ''the specific sectors, subsectors, or activities for which that Party may maintain existing, or adopt new or more restrictive, measures'' that are not in conformity with the various obligations imposed by the Agreement, such as National Treatment (Articles 10.3 or 11.2), Most-Favored Nation (Articles 10.4 or 11.3), and Market Access (Article 11.4). With respect to the Transportation Sector, the U.S. Schedule to Annex II lists 12 types of measures that the United States has specifically reserved the right to either maintain or adopt new more restrictive measures. These 12 types of measures generally reflect the current restrictions placed on foreign investment and/or ownership of maritime assets by U.S. domestic law. Phrased another way, the United States has reserved the right to maintain our existing legal restrictions with respect to those aspects of maritime transportation in which we already have limitations, as well as adopt new measures in these categories that may be more restrictive.

Additionally, the U.S. Schedule indicates that we do not include in our reservations either ''vessel construction and repair'' or the ''landside aspects of port activities.'' The noninclusion of these measures in our schedule merely indicates that the U.S. government is not reserving the right to impose a future restrictive measure with respect to ''landside aspects of port activities.'' It does not appear possible to interpret this language as granting any type of new business opportunity to Oman or Omani based companies. Moreover, with respect to ''landside aspects of port activities'' the language in Annex II specifically states that the promised treatment ''is conditional upon obtaining comparable market access in these sectors from Oman.'' As a result of this language, it appears that the proposed Oman FTA does not grant any new opportunities for business investment to Oman that do not already exist, nor does it allow Oman to establish ''landside aspects of port activities'' unless it is determined that comparable market access is provided to U.S. companies in Oman. Indeed, it may be possible to argue that the language in Annex II in fact potentially limits the opening of U.S. markets with respect to ''landside aspects of port activities'' because it imposes a comparable access requirement that does not currently exist under domestic law.

Another argument raised in opposition to the proposed Oman FTA is that it provides a type of ''pre-clearance'' to businesses in Oman with respect to ''landside aspects of port activities.'' It is unclear at this time precisely what the term ''pre-clearance'' means in this context. For the purposes of the memorandum, however, we will assume that this language refers to the national security review conducted by Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). CFIUS, as you may know, was the executive branch entity responsible for reviewing national security and other implications of the Dubai Ports World transaction. U.S. law permits the President, at his discretion, to investigate the national security implications of ''mergers, acquisitions, and takeovers . . . by or with foreign persons which could result in foreign control of persons engaged in interstate commerce in the United States.'' In addition, domestic law requires the President to conduct an investigation ''in any instance in which an entity controlled by or acting on behalf of a foreign government seeks to engage in any merger, acquisition, or takeover which could result in control of a person engaged in interstate commerce in the United States that could affect the national security of the United States.'' The President, by Executive Order, has delegated the responsibility for these investigations to CFIUS.

Based on our review of the proposed Oman FTA, there appears to be no provision that would amend, alter, or adjust this statutory process or its requirements in any way. As a result of the proposed Oman FTA, should a privately owned company in Oman seek to engage in the ''landside aspects of port activities,'' a CFIUS review could still be performed at the discretion of CFIUS, pursuant to the statute. Similarly, should a company owned or controlled by the Omani government wish to engage in any ''landside aspects of port activities'' at a U.S. port, they would still, pursuant to U.S. law, be required to proceed through the CFIUS process and receive approval from the committee prior to beginning operations. The proposed Oman FTA appears to contain no language that would exempt Oman or Omani government controlled companies from these domestic legal requirements.

Finally, it has been argued that the proposed Oman FTA would allow so-called ''shell corporations'' to be established in Oman for the purpose of benefitting from the FTA's provisions. For example, assume that Dubai Ports World (DPW), a company controlled by the government of Dubai, were to establish a store front in Oman for the sole purpose of taking advantage of the FTA's investment, market access, and national treatment provisions. Presumably, part of the incentive for doing this would be so that DPW could avail themselves of the investor-state dispute mechanism should their attempts to do business in the United States be denied. The argument against the proposed Oman FTA assumes that the United States would either have to grant DPW access to the U.S. market or face considerable costs in defending our denial of market access. Should the government deny market access, the ensuing litigation could result in an adverse decision costing taxpayers a substantial amount of money in compensatory payments to Dubai.

A careful review of the text of the proposed Oman FTA, however, indicates that this scenario is unlikely to develop. Specifically, Article 10.11(2) addresses this concern by stating that a ''Party may deny the benefits of [the Investment Chapter] to an investor of the other Party that is an enterprise of such other Party and to investments of that investor if the enterprise has no substantial business activities in the territory of the other Party and persons of a non-Party, or of the denying Party, own or control the enterprise.'' Thus, the proposed FTA, by its own provisions, clearly permits the United States to deny benefits under the Investment Chapter to any company or individual unless there are ''substantial business activities'' established in Oman. Therefore, it appears that the establishment of a mere ''shell corporation'' would likely not be considered the establishment of ''substantial business activity'' and, as a result, the United States would be entitled to deny benefits.

This legal position is consistent with administration positions regarding substantially similar language contained in other FTAs. For example, in the Statement of Administrative Action that accompanied the North American Free Trade Agreement, the executive branch stated that ''shell companies could be denied benefits but not, for example, firms that maintain their central administration or principle place of business in the territory of, or have a real and continuous link with, the country where they are

established.'' This language appears to establish a very high threshold for ''substantial business activities'' by requiring both central administration and principal place of business in the country before benefit can be claimed. Given this interpretive language, it does not appear that DPW, or any other foreign corporation, would be able to satisfy such requirements through a ''shell corporation.'' In addition, for Oman to obtain any of the benefits listed in Annex II with respect to ''landside aspects of port activities'' they will, as previously discussed, have to provide ''reciprocal market access'' or else the United States has an additional legal basis to deny market access to Omani companies.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY,
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
Washington, DC, July 20, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I understand that concerns have recently arisen over the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, FTA, and its possible link to the security of U.S. ports—particularly regarding the dispute settlement provisions.

First, this agreement is strongly supportive of our national security in general and the war on terror specifically. It marks another important step in our efforts to deepen and strengthen commercial ties with countries in the Middle East that are trying to modernize and give their people long-term economic opportunities and political rights. The United States should be a catalyst for economic growth and stability in the region and an active supporter and partner of countries, such as Oman, that are seeking to integrate into the global trading community. Oman has been a solid ally in our efforts in the Middle East and in the war on terror, and we need to demonstrate to all countries that our allies in this effort have a reliable friend in the United States as they seek a better economic future.

Second, Article 21.2 of the U.S.-Oman FTA provides for a national security exception that allows the United States to take measures that we determine are necessary for the protection of our essential security interests.

Foreign acquisitions of companies in the United States that operate port terminals are subject to section 721 of the Defense Production Act, the Exon-Florio amendment, which authorizes the President to block and/or force divestment of any proposed or ongoing foreign investment in the United States that threatens to impair U.S. national security. The Exon-Florio Amendment falls within the national security exception, noted above, as a provision that the United States ''considers necessary for . . . the protection of its own essential security interests.''

Port security in our country is not managed by port terminal operators. A combination of municipal and State port authorities, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard are responsible for our Nation's port security.

As the Secretary of the Treasury, it is my responsibility to ensure the Exon-Florio amendment is executed. Protection of the national security is my highest responsibility. To be clear, the FTA negotiated with Oman neither subjects national security interests to a third-party tribunal's assessment—as some have alleged—nor does it alter, amend, or adjust the President's Exon-Florio statutory powers to protect the nation's security in any way.

The FTA with Oman provides greater opportunities and opens new markets for U.S. products, investors, and workers. I urge you and your colleagues to pass the legislation to implement this FTA as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

HENRY M. PAULSON, Jr.,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5684, the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. While the agreement would provide some benefits both for the people of the U.S. and Oman, I think the agreement contains more flaws than benefits, and I believe it must be rejected.

The agreement, which is similar to free trade agreements (FTA)s with Middle Eastern countries Morocco and Bahrain, would provide the U.S. and Oman duty-free access for almost all consumer and industrial goods, with special provisions for agriculture, textiles and apparel. Both countries would phase out all tariffs on the remaining eligible goods within 10 years.

I have supported a number of trade agreements to expand access to foreign markets for exports as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen the American economy. While expanding market access for American industry, financial markets and farmers is critical, I believe it needs to be done responsibly, accounting for the treatment and protection of workers and the environment. This agreement makes efforts to do so but in my opinion needs to go further.

Regarding the agreement's labor provisions, I am concerned that Oman is not in compliance with International Labor Organization (ILO) core labor standards. There are no labor unions in Oman today. The royal decree issued by Sultan Qaboos—which prohibits forced labor and endorses the use of collective bargaining and strikes—is a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done. It's important that the provisions in the recent decree be implemented before Congress considers this agreement. Regardless of the outcome of today's vote, I urge the Administration and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to monitor and take necessary steps to ensure the implementation of this decree.

I think the Administration and the USTR would be well served by including labor provisions, such as those contained in the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, in the body of future trade agreements and making them subject to sanctions via dispute resolution procedures. The dispute resolution procedures continue to fall short in FTAs negotiated by the Bush Administration, and the Oman FTA is no exception. It is important that the United States takes step to ensure our trading partners provide workers with basic labor rights.

I am also concerned about reports that the U.S.-Oman FTA would create a new right requiring the U.S. to allow any Omani company to buy U.S. port operations. Given the uproar earlier this year over the news that Dubai Ports World had been permitted to take over the operations of several U.S. ports, it seemed only reasonable today to pass the Cardin amendment, which would close the loophole in the current trade agreement that allows a foreign company with operations in Oman to operate U.S. Port facilities. But the Republican leadership would not allow the amendment to be considered.

Expanding the liberalization of trade in goods and services between the U.S. and Oman can help us build a stronger relationship with a strategic country in the Middle East. I firmly believe the Bush Administration squandered this opportunity by not paying sufficient attention to national security concerns and by not ensuring basic labor standards in the agreement, which is why I must oppose H.R. 5684 today.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). We need a new trade policy that recognizes today's realities of the global economy by promoting worker rights, environmental protection and access to health care. This Oman deal fails to meet that test.

Expanding trade opportunities can lead to job growth and economic vitality in Maine and around the country. Trade policy should reflect all our important societal values, not just commercial concerns, in order to create a stronger and more competitive America, encourage broader prosperity at home and abroad, and create a better, healthier future for ourselves and our children.

Inevitably, trade agreements create winners and losers within the U.S. economy. No trade deal can be considered independently of other policies designed to help those who will be shortchanged. Unfortunately, recent U.S. economic policies will make matters worse. The President's budget, adopted by the majority in Congress, cuts programs vital to helping Americans displaced by new trade agreements: job training, vocational education, adult education, community development, and small business aid. It is irresponsible and immoral to inflict a double blow on our most economically vulnerable citizens.

If we do not reverse the disturbing disappearance of manufacturing and information technology jobs, the American economy will suffer even greater job losses and long-term damage.

The U.S.-Oman FTA falls short in the area of worker rights. Its only enforceable labor obligation is a requirement that Oman enforce its own labor laws, even though Oman's laws fail to comply with basic international standards in 10 specific areas. We should mandate Oman abide by core labor rules, to be fair to their own workers and keep trade on a level playing field.

The Oman pact continues a dangerous trend of using trade policy to extend anticompetitive protections for the highly profitable brand name drug industry. Although generic drugs lower prices and therefore improve public health, the intellectual property provisions inserted by the Bush Administration would delay entry of generic prescription drugs by imposing restrictive rules on the developing countries covered by the agreements.

I fear these provisions could come back to hurt Americans, as Congress' ability to legislate on health care could be restricted by international trade obligations. In essence, the Administration is giving powerful drug makers legal standing to challenge domestic U.S. health care laws through trade dispute mechanisms.

We see the double standard. The Administration champions international trade standards when they protect pharmaceutical industry profits, but reject them when they protect workers' rights.

I voted against the fast track/Trade Promotion Authority bill, in part because I believed that it ceded too much authority to the Executive Branch. The experience with this

Oman deal validates my concern. In June, the Senate Finance Committee approved an amendment to the pact stipulating that goods made in Oman with forced labor may not benefit from the trade agreement. When the White House later submitted the agreement to Congress, it left the forced labor provision out. The Administration has ignored the will of Congress. The blank check permitted by this fast track authority is a clear case where bad process leads to bad policy.

I urge my colleagues to reject the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement, and insist on a new, balanced trade policy guided by consensus, not ideology.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Oman FTA, though not without reservation. Increased economic, social, and political ties with Oman are noble goals and ones for which we should strive. However, the facts behind the crafting of the Oman FTA suggest that this is a hurried trade agreement.

I can support an agreement that serves to support the interests of all parties at stake. I have based my previous votes on free trade agreements by this standard, and by this standard, I have decided to vote against the Oman FTA. While I do not doubt that some sectors of the U.S. economy will benefit from passage of this bill, I am fearful of the repercussions that will face many of our manufacturing industries.

I recognize that Oman is a key alley in the War on Terrorism and a leader in improving the relationship between the Arab world and Israel, but trade agreements should not be judged by beneficial strategic alliances alone. The United States has other allies in the Middle East on the War on Terrorism and should make agreements with those allies in which jobs held by the American people are not sacrificed.

In addition, the Oman FTA may include a dangerous loophole that jeopardizes our Nation's port security. In its present form, this agreement allows a foreign company with operations in Oman to operate U.S. port facilities. The Cardin amendment would provide that the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement cannot take effect until the U.S. withdraws its commitment to allow companies with operations in Oman to operate ''landside aspects of U.S. port activities.''

Furthermore, the OFTA would expand the failed model of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. This model has been devastating to the U.S. industrial base, accelerating job loss and lowering living standards in the United States while exacerbating poverty and social disparities in the developing nations with which we trade.

Current Omani law does not come close to meeting core International Labor Organization standards. Despite some improvements made to Oman's legal framework, Oman's labor laws today do not provide for the exercise of the most important and fundamental workers' rights: freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

In order to ensure progress, we must establish a system of improved standards in education, labor, and environment, among others. In this regard, the OFTA falls short of established standards. The OFTA has neither sufficient nor enforceable labor provisions. This omission of labor standards will result in the continuation of severe labor conditions for both adults and children. This agreement could permit businesses to profit by exploiting the impoverished. I cannot accept an agreement that allows businesses to increase their profit margins at the expense of the underprivileged.

It seems clear to me that under the current refrain of ''free trade to fight poverty,'' sufficient resources are not being used to help the poor. Businesses are often more interested in the bottom line than the bottom of society. Foreign governments are often far too eager to invite these companies into their nations. This is not the best manner to help fight poverty in the Third World. In order to fight poverty, we must insist on the utilization of resources to protect the poor, not to exploit them. We must insist on better labor and environmental standards in order to ensure that the poor also benefit from free trade agreements.

Over 400 American organizations have announced strong opposition to the Oman FTA. These organizations represent a large number of Americans who oppose the OFTA. Of the 400 groups that oppose the OFTA, there are at least six prominent organizations from the city that I have the privilege of representing, Houston. These organizations include the:

Harris County Central Labor Council;

Houston Globalization Forum;

Houston Globalization Working Group;

Houston Peace and Justice Center;

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 716; and

The Sheet Metal Workers Local 54.

More than three million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the US since 1998. Increasingly, offshore outsourcing is impacting even highly educated and highly skilled workers. Protecting American jobs generally and especially those jobs belonging to my constituents in the 18th district of Texas is of the utmost priority to me. Thus, I can not stand by and let Americans continue to lose their jobs.

Therefore, we must insist that our trade agreements contain more than an expansion of business interests; they must also contain provisions that expand social and political interests. We must ensure that trade agreements benefit the wealthy and the poor, men and women, young and old. This agreement fails to meet these standards, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, today we are considering yet another fundamentally flawed free trade agreement—the U.S.-Oman FTA.

How many times will it take to learn that the current model just isn't cutting it? Given the failures of NAFTA and CAFTA, you would think that the U.S.-Oman FTA would be an improvement. Sadly, the same misguided formula is being applied again.

Just look at the facts; you simply cannot camouflage a race to the bottom. So please don't be fooled by the word games that proponents of this deal will play.

FTAs should promote democracy and offer new opportunities for all parties involved. They should not benefit a select few by making the rich wealthier and bankrupting the poor.

We should be protecting labor standards, human rights, the environment, access to medicines, and national sovereignty—not sacrificing them under the guise of promoting business and economic growth. When will we learn that these are not contradictory goals?

But again, these critical issues are shoved to the margins in empty promises and side-letters. There is no excuse for why this trade deal is not fair and balanced.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote against another ludicrous trade deal.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives has an opportunity to support the U.S. intellectual property industries by approving the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement.

The agreement is supported by both the International Intellectual Property Association, which is comprised of seven copyright-based trade associations representing over 1,900 different companies, and the Information Technology Industry Council, representing 35 leading high-tech industries, because it will raise the level of intellectual property protection in Oman in a number of ways.

The agreement implements the WIPO Internet Treaties, which provide standards for digital copyrighted material; it protects copyrighted works for extended terms, including 95 years for sound recordings and performances; and it ensures that copyright owners will have the exclusive right to make their works available online.

The agreement will also strengthen the enforcement of intellectual property rights in Oman by including agreed upon criminal standards for copyright infringement with stronger remedies and penalties and by criminalizing end user piracy. These provisions will provide a strong deterrence against piracy and counterfeiting.

Finally, Oman has committed to zero tariffs on all software, movies, music, consumer products, books and magazines exported into the country and to zero tariffs on technology products used to access the Internet.

I urge my colleagues to support this important sector of the U.S. economy and vote in favor of the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the issue of trade has remained contentious over the years.

I believe in the ideals of free trade but it must also be fair trade.

We have to take a close look at each agreement and weigh them on their individual merits.

If the President wants to receive overwhelming support on these agreements he has the power to do it. President Bush has the power to make trade an issue that is strongly supported by all of my colleagues, but he refuses to add what Democrats have been demanding on labor and the environment.

When I look at an agreement various factors go into making my decision process, are we opening new markets for our goods and services, will labor standards be protected, what is our relationship with our potential free trade partner.

As a member of the Middle East subcommittee on the International Relations Committee, I view Oman not as just a trade bill but also as a foreign policy tool.

Oman has been a strong friend and ally of the United States and is providing critical assistance in the global war against terrorism and this agreement will continue to strengthen our relationship.

The 9/11 Commission has recommended that the United States build stronger relationship with moderate Muslim nations such as Oman to build an economic and political partnership.

Besides the economic benefits the United States will enjoy from the implementation of

this free trade agreement it also has spurred our friends in Oman to move beyond their current labor laws. While I would like to see a more progressive stance on labor, I believe these new reforms are genuine.

Oman has shown they are a stable nation in a sea of conflicts in the Middle East and my hope is that this agreement will help move them further down the path of moderation.

I think it is worth noting that during Israel's recent conflict with Hezbollah and Hamas, Oman has been noticeably restrained in criticizing the Jewish State for protecting her citizens.

Oman is a valued member of the Middle East community and this agreement will make them even more so.

At the core of this trade initiative is the belief that through economic opportunity and partnership, with the United States and Israel, that the goal of peace in the region can be furthered.

I understand that perfection can be an unattainable goal but sometimes you must weigh all the pros and cons and on Oman the pros tipped the scale. I also want to address the point of the Dubai port sale raised by the opponents and the ability of an Omani company or another company to base themselves in Oman to try to purchase American port facilities or other infrastructure.

While there are many theoreticals as to what could or could not happen, any purchase of an American asset by an Omani company would be subject to review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, CFIUS. As the lead sponsor along with Representatives ROY BLUNT, CAROLYN MALONEY, and DEBORAH PRYCE of a bipartisan CFIUS reform, I understand the purchase of American assets by foreign companies or governments well.

This agreement with Oman does not change one bit the CFIUS process and doesn't make it any less secure.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my views regarding the Oman Free Trade Agreement.

I have supported certain trade agreements in the past because I believe they can be an important step toward opening markets for U.S. businesses. I also believe that the economic interdependence that flows from trade agreements can help create a more cooperative and peaceful world by solidifying ties between nations. That is why I supported agreements with Australia, Chile, Morocco, Bahrain and Singapore.

This outlook informs my approach to trade agreements and as I carefully considered the provisions of the Oman Free Trade agreement, I recognized its potential for opening Oman's market to U.S. agriculture, manufacturing and the services industry. But a trade agreement is about more than trade; it is also about the fair treatment of workers and other considerations.

With respect to worker's rights, the Oman FTA is seriously flawed. Like CAFTA, the Oman FTA only requires the Omani Government to enforce its own labor laws. And when violations occur, the Omani Government is only required to pay a financial penalty to itself. This provision is a source of concern to me in light of reports by the international labor community that Oman's labor laws fall far short of meeting the International Labor Organization's core labor standards and do not provide Omani workers with the fundamental protections needed to prevent workplace exploitation.

Oman has a massive guest worker population, comprising over 75 percent of Oman's total work force. According to reports, in Oman, guest workers are prevented from exercising their international labor rights and have reportedly been jailed for complaining about the working conditions and violation of labor rights.

My concerns about the Oman FTA were reinforced by news reports coming out of Jordan about violations of Jordanian workers rights. Before these incidents, the Jordan Free Trade Agreement was considered the gold standard for labor provisions in trade agreements. Jordan's labor laws are strong and it has long experience administrating them. That is why, when I read the May 3, 2006, New York Times article describing the abusive conditions in Jordan's apparel industry, I also grew concerned about the lack of protections for workers in Oman.

Reports are emerging from Jordan of an environment where workers put in 20-hour days with little or no pay and where physical abuse is rampant. If workers rights are not enforced in Jordan, there is little hope that workers in Oman—where independent unions are outlawed—will have their rights protected.

Trade agreements must at least hold open the reasonable prospect that workers will be treated fairly. This agreement fails that test.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5684, the Oman Free Trade Agreement, because I think it is the right thing to do. I am going to vote for this agreement because I believe that free trade can be a way to promote our national security through international cooperation and economic growth.

The country of Oman is an important ally of the United States in a part of the world where we need more friends. It is also a country that is growing, one that will provide economic opportunities and jobs to our Nation through increased exports. Upon passage of this agreement, Oman will provide immediate duty-free access to 87 percent of U.S. agricultural exports and 100 percent duty-free trade in industrial and consumer products.

Mr. Speaker, Oman is a friend to the United States and a leader in the Middle East region. Oman has demonstrated this by passing tough new labor laws, normalizing relations with Israel, and supporting the U.S. efforts in Iraq. Passage of this agreement will demonstrate that we can do more to enhance our Nation's national security through cooperation and economic development.

Although this legislation is not perfect, approving the Oman Free Trade Agreement is in America's national interest, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). All time for debate on the bill has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 925, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of H.R. 5684 will be followed by a 5-minute vote on suspending the rules on H. Con. Res. 448.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 221, nays 205, not voting 7, as follows

[Roll No. 392]

YEAS—221

Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boustany
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis, Tom
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emerson
English (PA)
Etheridge
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Istook
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Matheson
McCaul (TX)
McCrery
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris
Meeks (NY)
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moore (KS)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Osborne
Oxley
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tanner
Tauscher
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Upton
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—205

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Ford
Frank (MA)
Gerlach
Gingrey
Gonzalez
Goode
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hastings (FL)
Hayes
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Lantos
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Ney
Norwood
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Otter
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rogers (AL)
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Simmons
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (PA)
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—7

Bishop (UT)
Davis (FL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Evans
McKinney
Northup
Nussle

□ 1452

Mr. NORWOOD and Mr. POMEROY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

COMMENDING NASA ON COMPLETION OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE'S SECOND RETURN-TO-FLIGHT MISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 448.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 448, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 393]

YEAS—415

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Bean
Beauprez
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardin
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson
Carter
Case
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Chocola
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Fitzpatrick (PA)
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall
Harman
Harris
Hart
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hostettler
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Istook
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jenkins
Jindal
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Ney
Norwood
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Osborne
Otter
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Sabo
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz (PA)
Schwarz (MI)
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Sodrel
Solis
Souder
Spratt
Stearns
Strickland
Stupak
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—17

Ackerman
Bishop (UT)
Brown (SC)
Davis (FL)
Davis, Jo Ann
Deal (GA)
Evans
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Northup
Nussle
Payne
Slaughter
Stark
Tancredo
Weiner

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes left in the vote.

□ 1500

So (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days in which to revise their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the week to come; and at this time, I yield to my friend, the majority leader, Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. I appreciate my colleague from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the House will convene next Monday at 12:30 for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider a number of measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members' offices by tomorrow afternoon.

For the balance of the week, the House will consider on Tuesday H.R. 1956, the business activity tax bill from the Judiciary Committee.

On Wednesday morning at 11 there will be a joint meeting of Congress to receive His Excellency Mr. Maliki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. Also on Wednesday we will consider H.R. 5682, the United States and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act from the International Relations Committee.

On Thursday, we will consider H.R. 5766, the Government Efficiency Act, and possibly H.R. 3282, the Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act from the Committee on Government Reform.

At this point, Friday is still up in the air. Our goal is to finish on Thursday. It is not a commitment but it is my goal, and I am hopeful that we will be able to meet it. It really will depend on the number of conference reports that may or may not be completed and whether we can fit those in during the week, if they come inside, like the gentleman understands.

I am hopeful that the Voc Ed conference report can be brought up. As the gentleman knows, we have been working on the pension conference. There is no agreement as yet, but I think we are moving toward one, and I am hopeful. But we will see.

I also have an announcement about September votes, which is a change in the calendar. There will be no votes on Tuesday, September 5. I anticipate that we will consider H.R. 503, to amend the Horse Protection Act to prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption. We expect that to be considered that first week we are back, and I just wanted Members to be aware of it.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I was very pleased to hear that we are going to be dealing with the Horse Protection Act. I am sure that all of us are concerned about that. I say that seriously.

But can you tell me when we might be doing the Worker Protection Act, particularly those that are working at the lower end of the scale, the minimum wage act?

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. We are continuing to have conversations about that issue, but no decisions as of yet. If there is, I will make sure that everyone is notified.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman, and I meant that seriously on the Horse Protection Act. I am sure it is an important piece of legislation, but we are very concerned and continue to be concerned, many, many Members on your side of the aisle continue to be concerned, about the 9 years that have transpired since we adjusted the minimum wage, no cost of living attached to it, and we are very hopeful that the majority leader and your side of the aisle will see fit to bring that forward.

We hope that you will bring it forward in a fashion that will not dilute the attention and focus on the workers, and by that I say attaching it to a tax bill or some other piece of legislation. We would hope that that would be a clean vote on the floor, and we think the majority of this House are for it. We think it is a very, very important piece of legislation, and we ask you to very seriously consider bringing it up next week if possible, but as early in September as possible.

September 29 has been put in the press as the target date at least. You mentioned one of the pieces of legislation that might be on in September. Can you tell me how definitive or definite a date that September 29 may be for the possible adjournment prior to the election?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. It is very definite.

Mr. HOYER. That is going to be the date?

Mr. BOEHNER. We are gone September 29. We will be back on November 13.

Mr. HOYER. November 13. There are all sorts of things I could say about post-election.

Mr. BOEHNER. I am sure you could.

Mr. HOYER. We will be happy when we get back here on the 13th.

Mr. BOEHNER. And we will be happy, too.

Mr. HOYER. To proceed with whatever legislation we decide ought to be considered, realizing we won't be sworn in until January as the majority party.

Mr. BOEHNER. What we call the lame duck session.

Mr. HOYER. Yes, it will undoubtedly be a lame duck session, I tell the majority leader.

Mr. BOEHNER. The only question is who will be lame.

Mr. HOYER. We could go on a long time on this. We probably ought to move along with the schedule because you and I have a different view as to who is going to be lame and who is going to be the duck and other issues of great importance to the American people.

On the issues, the Labor-Health bill, obviously the minimum wage is one of the issues on that bill, but there are a lot of other issues on that bill as well. Do you have any expectation the Labor-Health bill will move either next week, I know it is not on the calendar, or in September?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. I appreciate my colleague for yielding. There are a number of issues related to that bill. I think it is doubtful that it will be up next week. I am hopeful that we will be able to consider it in September.

Mr. HOYER. Moving on to the pension conference report, there have been some reports that there may have been some progress in the pension conference, but I want to tell the leader again, very seriously, I read in one of the journals that the conference, or a group, had been meeting. There had been five Republicans and two Democrats.

I want to tell my friend, in all seriousness, and I have asked you to engage on this, not one Democrat from the House of Representatives has been engaged in these meetings. The two Democrats that are mentioned in that story are both Democratic United States Senators. They may be very fine United States Senators. This is a two-House, bicameral Congress.

The gentleman made a representation to me, and I take him at his word, I believe he means it, that a conference is better or a discussion on where we are going on this pension bill, a critically important bill that has been pending now for almost half a year or longer, I suppose, the gentleman knows the exact date of that, and has not moved, and during that period of time, Democrats from the House of Representatives have not been included in the pension conference. I have been, I think, pretty polite on my request to you, Mr. Leader, but this is not the process that we ought to be following.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. I appreciate the gentleman's concerns, but I think the gentleman from Maryland understands that I am not the chairman of the conference. I don't decide when we meet, who meets or what room we meet in. I have expressed the gentleman's concerns, and hopefully we will have all of the Members together very soon.

Mr. HOYER. I hope that is the case, Mr. Leader, and again, I take you at your word. While you are not the chairman of the conference, you are the majority leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives.

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman would yield, the other body is chairing this conference, and the gentleman has

been on a number of conferences over the years and understands this process, that the body who chairs the the conference makes those decisions.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, one option, of course, is the Republican Members from the House of Representatives that are participating in these meetings indicate to our Senate colleagues that they are not prepared to proceed unless there are Members of the minority party present in those meetings to discuss issues of critical importance to literally millions of people in this country.

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman would yield, I will be happy to make that suggestion to Mr. MCKEON and Mr. THOMAS.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO DECLARE A RECESS ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2006, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING IN JOINT MEETING HIS EXCELLENCY NOURI AL-MALIKI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it may in order at any time on Wednesday, July 26, 2006, for the Speaker to declare a recess, subject to the call of the Chair, for the purpose of receiving in joint meeting His Excellency Nouri Al-Maliki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, JULY 24, 2006

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5682, UNITED STATES AND INDIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of July 24 to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 5682, the United States and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in room H–312 of the Capitol by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 25. Members should draft their amendments to the bill as ordered reported by the Committee on International Relations, which was ordered reported on June 27, 2006, and is expected to be filed tomorrow, Friday, July 21.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, JULY 21, 2006, TO FILE REPORT ON H.R. 5682, UNITED STATES AND INDIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on International Relations may have until midnight, July 21 to file a report on H.R. 5682, the United States and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2830, PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. George Miller of California moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2830 be instructed—

(1) to agree to the provisions contained in subsections (a) through (d) of section 601 of the Senate amendment (relating to prospective application of age discrimination, conversion, and present value assumption rules with respect to cash balance and other hybrid defined benefit plans) and not to agree with the provisions contained in title VII of the bill as passed the House (relating to benefit accrual standards); and

(2) to agree to the provisions contained in section 413 of the Senate amendment (relating to computation of guaranteed benefits of airline pilots required to separate from service prior to attaining age 65), but only with respect to plan terminations occurring on or after September 11, 2001.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to instruct be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as we just heard in the colloquy between the majority leader and the minority whip, there is expectation that a conference committee may conclude on the pension reform bill, and that is why I rise today because that bill may, in fact, be coming to the floor of the House of Representatives and to the Senate within the next week.

□ 1515

I rise to urge my colleagues to vote again to send a message to the conferees that they should not conclude this report until they provide for the protection of older workers who are facing the conversions to cash balance plans. That means older workers who the companies are now putting on notice that they will change their benefits, they will no longer realize what they had long anticipated, the benefits of a defined benefit plan, that they will now get a substitute plan for their current pension plan, what is called a cash balance plan.

Despite overwhelming votes in support of protecting older workers' pensions in the House and in the Senate, the Republican leadership plans to thumb its nose at older workers and exclude the vital transition protection. That means that many workers will lose hundreds of dollars a month in expected retirement benefits. Many of these workers will be in excess of 50 years of age, and it is highly unlikely they will be able to recover the loss of their retirement benefits, retirement benefits they have been counting on for many years, retirement benefits they have been counting on in exchange for their labor, that they signed a contract in exchange for their labor with their employers; and today, the Congress is getting ready to tell them we are sorry, we are not going to make the employers live up to their agreements, and we are not even going to provide a transition to you to soften the economic blow.

If this is permitted to happen, it is shameful and it is an abuse of power by the Republican leadership, arrogantly defying the clear wishes of Members of both the House and the Senate on behalf of very special interests that do not happen to be the workers of this country.

The conference language draft by the Republican conferees is a pension Trojan horse and allows companies to legally renege on their promises to workers who played by the rules, who were told that they could accrue benefits to retire, especially those who spent decades at the company.

Here is what AARP CEO William Novelli says about this backroom Republican deal for older workers. ''AARP is deeply troubled that members of the pension conference committee may be considering adopting language from the House bill that would severely undercut pension protections against age discrimination currently provided older workers under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. We cannot support legislation that would undermine the age discrimination laws and permit the reduction of pension benefits for older workers, thus discouraging older workers from continuing to participate in the workforce. Our members, and older workers in general, care a great deal about these issues, and we will be informing them of the outcome of this action.''

The Senate passed its pension bill with these protections 97–2. And the House voted on these measures overwhelmingly in a motion to instruct earlier.

It also not only cuts cash balance, but it cuts the protections to the pilots. Pilots who are required under Federal law to retire at age 60 now take a double hit with their pensions going into the PBGC. Because they retired early, not that they wanted to retire, they are required under Federal law to retire early, but because they retired early, they take an additional hit on their pension, and this affects many, many airline pilots and is an unfair treatment to these individuals.

Again, the House and the Senate have voted twice to protect older workers in cash balance conversions. The House voted twice to protect airline pilots from unfair pension cuts at the PBGC.

This motion to instruct is about fundamental fairness to older workers, specifically for those older workers suddenly faced with cash balance conversions and for those airline pilots faced with federally mandated early retirement.

During the 1990s, hundreds of large employers switched to these cash balance plans, including IBM, CSX, Verizon, and the Federal Government. When we changed our pension plan back in the 1990s, we did this. Motorola, Dow Chemical, Federal Express, Wells Fargo Bank and Honeywell, they all made the decision to provide a transition and a protection for older workers, realizing that those older workers had an expectation of retirement benefit. That was not going to happen, but they would provide them some protection so they didn't take the full brunt of those changes.

It is the decent thing to do. It is what Secretary Snow did when he was at CSX. It is what he voted to do at Verizon. This is the decent thing to do for workers. The benefits to the companies are immense, even if they protect these older workers in this situation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this motion to instruct for two reasons, because of process and because of substance.

First, on process. As the pension conference draws to a close, the matter before us today is little more than a last desperate attempt by some to distract from the fact that we are on the verge of the most fundamental reforms to the private pension system in a generation. In fact, this is more of a motion to obstruct than it is a motion to instruct.

This kind of obstruction shouldn't surprise us, however. It has been going on for quite awhile. Let's not forget that those offering this motion were the same Members who could not even bring themselves to vote ''yes'' or ''no'' on the House pension bill when it was being considered by the House Education and Workforce Committee last summer. Rather, they voted ''present,'' acknowledging that they were, in fact, in the room.

While they attempted to politicize this issue, did they ever offer a comprehensive pension reform plan of their own? No. They just stood on the sidelines trying to obstruct our progress, just like they are today.

I also oppose this motion because of its substance. This pension reform debate is and always has been about the massive underfunding in worker pensions, about the need to change the status quo. This obstructionist motion to instruct does just the opposite: It essentially preserves the status quo and even makes the situation worse.

First, on hybrid plans. This motion to instruct essentially codifies benefit expectations in hybrid plans, tying the hands of those who voluntarily offer them. To require a guarantee of minimum benefits before participants have actually earned them sets a very bad precedent. Let's not forget that hybrid plans are the sole bright spot in the defined benefit world. If not for these plans, the defined benefit system would be withering on the vine. To place restrictions on a system that actually provides more generous benefits for the majority workers than do traditional plans would be neither reasonable nor responsible.

And on the airline pilots provision, again, this would make matters worse for the pension system and the American taxpayer. The motion to instruct would actually increase the deficit of the PBGC even though this pension reform process is designed to save the agency from insolvency and taxpayers footing the bill for a massive bailout. It is estimated that if this provision were applied, the cost to the PBGC for all pilots' plans would probably exceed $2.5 billion over the next 10 years. That additional debt would be borne by all the other companies that sponsor and fund defined benefit pension plans. Again, this is neither reasonable nor responsible.

Mr. Speaker, our ultimate goal is to ensure our defined benefit system remains viable for generations to come. This motion to instruct would undermine that effort. It is as simple as that. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the motion to instruct and reject this attempt to obscure progress on pension reform.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to instruct; and I hear my friend's comments about process and responsibility. This has been the most irresponsible pension conference process one could imagine.

Mr. Speaker, I was sent here, as were my colleagues, duly elected by my constituents to speak for them. I was appointed by the leadership of my party to participate in this conference to speak for all of our constituents. There have been many meetings; we have been invited to none. There have been many discussions; we have participated in none.

So if you want to talk about a responsible process, let's talk about one where every person duly elected to represent his or her constituents has a chance to do so. This process is a travesty.

Now, on to the substance.

The words ''cash balance plans'' are a little hard to understand. They are theoretical, they are abstract; but they are very easy to understand if you are 50 years old and you have been working somewhere for 25 years and you are planning your retirement assuming you are going to get a certain amount every month in the mail as a check that you have earned.

And then, one, the HR department comes in and says we have changed our mind. Instead of getting a check for a certain amount every month that you have earned, we are going to give you a lump sum instead, and assume that when you invest it, you will get about the same amount.

Mr. MILLER's motion says two things: It says that the version of this idea that passed the Senate 97–2 should be the version that applies; that maybe we should give some workers the chance to choose whether to go into this system or not, to put more power into the hands of the worker and the retiree to choose what happens to them, rather than have the employer make that decision. That sounds reasonable to me.

And the second thing that Mr. MILLER does is to say let's take the assumptions that are most protective to

the retiree. Let's err on the side of giving the retiree too much, not too little. I don't think that is too much to ask.

I think the House should join with 97 Senators from both parties and adopt the version of this idea that is in the Senate bill. Vote ''yes'' on Mr. MILLER's motion to instruct.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. MILLER for this motion to instruct the pension conferees because a defined pension plan is a promise. It is a promise that workers count on when they come to the end of their employment. It is a promise that they plan their future around.

Many workers have been promised benefits at the end of their work service. In fact, many have accepted retirement benefits instead of pay increases. Now remember that. Many people choose to forgive a pay increase and get an increase in their pension instead.

Now, unless we have reform that allows companies to convert to cash balance programs, programs that don't consider the older worker, a worker who has planned for years and years how they are going to live the rest of their lives in dignity, we have broken a great promise to these wonderful workers.

Not protecting their retirement would result in many, many times reducing their benefits by at least half. Imagine trying to live, through no fault of your own, on half of what you had planned on. We would not expect people to live on half of the amount of food or half the amount of medicine they would need; how can we expect them to live on half of a pension?

These pension benefits have been earned. They must be honored. Mr. Speaker, these workers were promised defined retirement benefits. They have earned those benefits. The Congress cannot allow companies to go back on their word. We, as a Congress, must support them. We must ensure these hardworking Americans that they will get the pension benefits they have been promised so they can plan, they don't have to look over their shoulders or go live with their kids or have half of their medications.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Miller motion to instruct.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his leadership on this motion to instruct.

I agree we need to protect the pension benefits of airline pilots, as well as ensure that when an employer converts from a traditional defined benefit plan to a cash balance plan, that their workers receive their full benefits.

We also need to draft rules that protect older workers because they can be vulnerable during such conversions. But we must also address the issue of providing retroactive legal certainty to 1,100 employers whose cash balance and hybrid pension plans are unfairly caught in limbo.

Addressing retroactivity is important to the retirement security of thousands of American workers that gain from these hybrid pensions which are defined benefit plans. It has been for 7 years that employers of sponsored cash balance and other hybrid plans have been caught in a web of legal uncertainty.

□ 1530

Beginning in 1999, the Internal Revenue Service felt it necessary to temporarily stop issuing determination letters for converted hybrid plans, and litigation through our court system has left the legality of all cash balance plans up in the air.

In my congressional district I have four major employers that offer pension benefits to their employees through either a cash balance or other hybrid pension plan. Some of these plans were acquired through merger and acquisition, while some were adopted through conversion.

These employers treated their employees fairly, giving them the choice as to whether or not to convert their plans and ensuring that workers' benefits were not diluted. And these four employers are not alone. There are a lot of good actors out there.

According to a recent AARP-funded study, 23 of the 25 largest cash balance plans, in other words, 92 percent, provided transition protections for their older employees when converting from defined traditional plans to cash balance plans.

Nonetheless, four employers in my district, as well as 1,100 others, are caught in a web of legal uncertainty. And we are in an era where companies are eliminating pension plans, including hybrid plans.

Failing to fix this problem will only perpetuate that trend. A cash balance plan is a defined benefit plan, and it is the future of our defined benefit system.

It is not correct that others have not offered alternatives. I specifically introduced H.R. 4274 to address this specific issue.

I ask all of my colleagues to pay attention to the issue. Cash balance plans are the future plans. They are portable. It is a way a worker can go from one place to another.

We need to protect older workers, and we need to make sure that this motion to instruct is passed.

I thank Mr. MILLER for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 9 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Miller motion to instruct, and I commend the gentleman from California for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the middle class in America today is under assault. Over the past 5 years, 5 million more Americans have slipped into poverty, 6 million have lost their health insurance, and nearly 3 million manufacturing workers have lost their jobs. The Republican leadership has refused to increase the minimum wage, $5.15 an hour, which hasn't been raised in nearly a decade, and is now at a 50-year low in terms of purchasing power.

And adding insult to injury, it is expected that next week we will be voting on a conference report that will allow large corporations to discriminate against their older employees by slashing their pensions up to half through cash balance pension schemes.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is our only attempt to say no. Age discriminatory cash balance pension schemes are wrong. We must protect millions of employees who have seen their pensions slashed by as much as 50 percent through age-discriminatory cash balance pension schemes. That is what this motion is all about.

Mr. Speaker, pension anxiety is sweeping the country. Millions of American workers who have worked at a company for 20 or 30 years, where promises have been made to them in terms of what their retirement would be, are now waking up to the fact that those promises are being reneged upon.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, large corporation after large corporation have been breaking the retirement promises they made to their employees, and that is wrong. Some companies are declaring bankruptcy so that they can break their retirement commitments. Other companies are freezing pension plans in order to slash the retirement benefits of older workers.

And over 300 companies throughout this country have slashed the pensions of their employees through cash balance pension schemes, sometimes up to 50 percent.

Congress must tell corporate America in no uncertain terms that when they make a promise to workers about their pensions, they must keep that promise.

Mr. Speaker, last December, the House passed a so-called pension reform bill that was hundreds of pages long. Included in that bill was an obscure provision to legalize age discrimination in cash balance plans prospectively. No floor amendments were allowed to strike this provision or offer any alternatives to it. Members were forced to vote up or down on the entire bill.

But the Senate did the right thing. In its bill, they provided important protections for older workers who would be negatively impacted by cash balance schemes.

The Senate language is supported by the AARP, the AFL–CIO, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the National Legislative Retirees Network, and the Pension Rights Center.

Today, just like we did in April, we have an opportunity to do the right thing for American workers. We can and should instruct the conference committee to adopt the Senate language on cash balance plans.

Mr. Speaker, there are some who support cash balance schemes. They argue that these plans benefit employees.

Well, a couple of years ago I asked the Congressional Research Service a simple question: What would happen to Members of Congress if their pensions were converted to a cash balance scheme? If it is so good for millions of American workers, clearly it must be good for the Members of Congress.

Well, shock of all shocks. Our Republican friends decided not to debate that issue on the floor of the House. And unless I am mistaken, they still do not want to convert Members' pensions to cash balance schemes, for good reason. Because if they did it, every Member would see a huge reduction in the pensions that they are looking forward to.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SANDERS. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I think that is an important point. When the Federal Government made the decision to change to the TSP system, which is turning out to be a very successful system, we provided this kind of transition. What the conference committee is about to impose on the American working public no Member of Congress would impose on themselves. They would be asking for some kind of transition, some kind of hold-harmless so that people would be protected who are older, who have more years into the system, because they don't have the ability to gather other income.

And I think the gentleman makes a very important point that, once again, life is different inside of the Beltway than it is outside of the Beltway. And the people outside of the Beltway have a lot less ability to try to make up for that lost savings to manage their retirement.

I thank the gentleman for making the point. I continue to yield.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me just pick up and agree with the gentleman.

The CRS did a study on this issue: What would happen to congressional pensions if we went the direction of cash balance? Well, among other things, the Speaker of the House would not be too happy about this. His pension went down by 70 percent.

So, today, I would ask the opponents of the Miller motion this question: If cash balance plans are so good for American workers, why don't we go first and adopt them here?

Well, obviously, that is not going to happen. If it is not good for Members of Congress, it is not a good idea for millions of American workers. Let's support the Miller motion and stand for the rights of millions of American workers today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SANDERS. I would yield.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I just want to again thank him for the point that this pension bill cannot be considered in a vacuum. The very same people who are going to be punished as a result of companies that convert to cash balance that will not provide this kind of protection, they can do it voluntarily, but they will not, and many of them won't, and the gentleman has struggled with companies who thought that they didn't have to.

These are the same people that are getting their retirement health care benefits cut back, that are having trouble with or are going to have trouble with paying for prescription drugs. Today, people are continuing to work and people say to people, you know, just save more money.

Well, as we know, most people, the average American working person has a great deal of difficulty saving. And to now tell them to save, if you are 50 years old, according to the GAO, you will lose about $238 a month. If you are 40 years old, you will lose about $188 a month. If you are 50 years old, this has to be net savings that you are going to have to try to save. You'd have to save, before your retirement, a net $40,000, outside of your rent, outside of your house payment, outside of your kids, outside of everything else, if you could get 5 percent return on your money.

Where does the American family go to get that kind of money that Congress is about to take away from them? Where do they go?

Most families, both people are working. And if you are 50 years old, it is highly unlikely that you are going to go out and find a job that is going to replace this loss of savings.

So when people say, well, we can't guarantee the expectations of these workers. No, what we are guaranteeing is a contract that this worker made with the company and the company made with the worker. We understand the benefits and the changes for younger workers, and this isn't about being against cash balance plans. It is about fairness.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me reiterate the point Ms. WOOLSEY made a few moments ago. We have people who have worked for a company for 20 or 30 years. During their careers, in many instances, they had offers to move elsewhere, but they said, no, I am going to stay here because I have a good retirement plan. And suddenly, for no fault of their own, that retirement plan is being pulled out from underneath them. They had dreamed of what their retirement would be. It is no longer. And they are 50 years of age. They are 52 years of age. Where do they go?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. The idea, again, the suggestion is somehow, when the Senate passed this, 97–3, and when we voted overwhelmingly in a motion to instruct to do this, that somehow you are trying to reserve the status quo. The fact is that CSX, a very successful railroad company, Verizon Telecom, the Federal Government, Motorola, Dow Chemical, Federal Express, Wells Fargo, these are not slacking companies. These are leaders in their industry. They all realized billions of dollars in savings. They also took care of their older workers. And that is what we are asking that this conference committee do.

You do not have to throw these older workers onto the wood pile. They can be protected. The company can realize billions of dollars over the life of the pension plans in savings that they can reinvest in their company, and they can change their pension plans. We just ask that you don't decimate older workers.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SANDERS. What was the vote in the Senate on this issue?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. The vote was 97–3.

Mr. SANDERS. So overwhelmingly a bipartisan vote. Let's stand with the Senate. Let's protect American workers.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. It was 97–2.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely fascinating to listen to the speakers, one extolling the virtues of cash balance plans, and the other condemning them.

I believe that the gentleman from California has the right to close, so at this time I would like to yield the balance of our time to the chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON).

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him for running this debate for us.

It is interesting. You know, I don't know what thrill there is in coming to the floor and trying to scare people that the Federal Government is trying to take away their pensions and trying to destroy their lives.

We have been working hard to try to finish up this pension conference. It is a very complicated, very complex issue. It hasn't been done at this level by the Congress for decades. And we are working hard on this.

And this week we have made tremendous progress. The fact is that what we have done this week, we are very, very close, and we should be able to wrap this up next week. And that is what we should be spending our time on, trying to finalize this bill, trying to get the help that is needed for these people and their pensions.

A few years ago, we had over 100,000 defined benefit plans. We are down now to about 30,000. And the whole purpose

of this bill is to protect the American people, to protect the worker.

Promises have been made. Promises should be kept. And so the fine line that we have been working on throughout this conference is to be able to strengthen the law that is currently in place, keep companies from going bankrupt, and keep companies from dropping their defined benefit plans. That is the goal; that is where we are.

We are, you know, if this were a marathon, we are down to the last few yards; and hopefully we will bring this to the floor next week for a final vote. And that is what we should be spending our time on, instead of this political charade.

I would encourage my colleagues to vote against this motion to instruct.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Let me inquire how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 8½ minutes left.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, I would hope that when this vote comes on Monday, that the House would, once again, reaffirm its obligation and its commitment to older workers in this country.

This is a defining moment for these workers. This is a defining moment about what kind of retirement many workers in this country who have been working for 20 or 30 years in a company, what kind of retirement they will have.

□ 1545

Will they have the retirement that was promised to them and that they have expected and that they have built their financial planning around, that they have built the decisions today about tomorrow around their families, their children, and others? That is really what this is about.

The gentleman is quite correct. They are quite close. They have been working very hard. It has been a one-party bill, but they have been working very hard, the Members of the House in this conference committee, and they are very close. They are just also very wrong. They are very wrong in how they treat the older workers of this country because, as we see from the GAO report, under the GAO report, under the plan that the Republicans want to bring to the floor, if the conversion plan is done the way it is allowed under the conference report, which will be Federal law, the average 50-year-old worker will lose about $238 in income each and every month of their retirement plan.

The question that most Members of Congress will not ask is, Where does that worker, where does that family, go to make up that income? Where do you go to earn the 40, the 60, the $80,000 you have to have over your retirement life to get that yield back? Most people cannot accumulate that kind of money in a 5- or 10-year period of time. So these workers who are under assault in terms of the retirement health care benefits, their retirement benefits, where do they go?

We know what the savings rate is. We keep telling America to save more. And the fact of the matter is most American families at the end of the month have very little left to save. It is simply not there. Can Congress be that insensitive to how most of America lives? Most of America is bombarded with advice from Money Magazine, from CNN, from Lou Dobbs, from all these people about how to save for your retirement. And they try. Some could do better. But for many families they are doing the best they can. But one of the bedrocks for many people in their fifties is knowing that they have a retirement plan that they thought they could count on. But the fact of the matter is when they pick up and read the business section of the newspaper, they read the headlines of the newspaper, they see that some of the biggest, most reliable corporations in the country are changing their pension plans. United Airlines just went into bankruptcy. Without any showing of desperate need, they just got rid of the plan for their employees. Talk to those fight attendants when you fly home tonight or you fly home tomorrow. Talk to those pilots and realize the extent to which their retirements have been devastated, absolutely devastated. But it has happened to people in all of the industries around the country.

And all that we are saying is follow the model by companies that have done it the right way, companies like Verizon, companies like Federal Express, companies like Wells Fargo Bank, Honeywell. There is a way you can do this and you can realize billions of dollars of savings, which are necessary. These plans are going to be changed, but they ought to be changed in a way that protects the older workers.

That is why the AARP, the American Association of Retired People, is so dead set against this provision. It recognizes the impact this is going to have on future retirees. It recognizes the impact it is going to have on current workers and on their ability to plan for their retirement.

They want to act like this is a carefully crafted pension plan and anybody who wants to suggest another alternative is only for the status quo and does not care about pensions.

The Senate voted 97–2 to treat these older workers right. It is the Republican leadership that has stepped in and twisted that away. We didn't get a chance to vote on that in the House. When I finally did get a vote after the bill passed, the House voted overwhelmingly to protect older workers.

Another class of workers who are at risk in this pension plan are the taxpayers. We now see that PBGC is telling us that current law is a better deal for the taxpayers than the plan they are coming up with to the tune of about $2 billion over the next decade.

Don't shake your head. It is right here. You guys had this information for months. We just had to get it under a FOIA agreement under your wonderful bipartisan arrangements.

So there is a lot to be concerned about with this pension plan. It is going to have a lot of bells and whistles, a lot of tax breaks. It is going to have more things than a monkey going to the circus. And a lot of people are going to vote for it. But what it is not going to have, it is not going to have protection for older workers. And Members of Congress ought to understand that when those older workers start to come to you, as their pension plans are dramatically changed by companies with no obligation to protect workers 50 and over, they are going to want to know where you were, and this is a vote which will tell them where you stand on this. And, hopefully, you will influence the pension conference, because this can be done. As we said, the Senate, after long deliberations on the pension bill, they voted 97–2 to do it the right way.

So I would hope that people would support this motion to instruct. I would hope they understand what this truly means to working people in this country and to their families and to their retirement.

It is a devastating picture when you meet your constituents who have lost their retirement, who have lost big chunks of their retirement, and they come up and they talk to you at the shopping center, they talk to you at the grocery store, they talk to you at a town hall, and they tell you what it means to their plans.

We were all stunned as a nation when pensioners got their plans wiped out and devastated by Enron. We called those people criminals. Here we call them legislators, because people are going to get a devastating hit on their pensions and we are going to say it is the law. There we said it was a crime. We said it was a crime.

Mr. McKEON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. You have plenty of time on your side.

You say it is a crime.

Mr. McKEON. But I hadn't been called a criminal.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. What are you doing to people? What are you doing to people?

You have controlled the conference. You control the White House. You control the House. You control the Senate. Control your time.

The fact of the matter is this is the same thing. We are making a conscious decision, a conscious decision, to rip away these pension benefits from these workers. And the most devastating thing about this decision is it is not necessary. You can have massive pension reform to the benefit of the employees, to the benefit of the employers, to the benefit of the shareholders, without devastating the older workers.

So why don't we do it right? Why don't we do it in a humane way? Why

don't we do it right, recognizing the situation that America's older workers find themselves in, people 50, 55, 60 years old? What are they going to do? Take a second job for their retirement? Maybe their spouse can go out and take a third job for their retirement?

That is not the way we should treat American citizens. That is not the way we should treat taxpayers. And that is not the way we should treat hard-working American families who simply do not have enough money to make up for this kind of devastating cut in their retirement.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the motion to instruct. It will be up sometime, I believe, Monday; and I would strongly encourage you to vote ''aye'' on this motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that the gentleman's words be taken down.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Could the gentleman describe the words he is referring to?

Mr. MCKEON. I would like to know for sure if he was calling us criminals.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. No. Well, read the words back. Maybe we can clarify it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The words complained of were spoken too far back in the debate for the gentleman's request to be timely. Other debate has ensued.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I object, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There is an objection to reclaiming the gentleman from California's (Mr. MCKEON) time.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.)

THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ AND CONTINUED VIOLENCE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today is the 161st time that I have come to the floor to deliver a 5-minute Special Order about the United States occupation of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this effort would not have been possible, it would have been totally impossible, without the excellent words and guidance and general assistance of a member of my staff, Eric Powers.

Mr. Speaker, Eric will be leaving my office tomorrow, after 3 years of service and 161 5-minute speeches, to attend Washington University in St. Louis, law school, where he will have the opportunity to further his work in the international law department. Mr. Speaker, believe me, Eric Powers will be missed and, believe me, Eric Powers is appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, Iraq is burning. It is becoming hard even to read the news accounts. The last few days have been marked by two of the deadliest attacks on civilians in months.

A new U.N. report concludes that roughly 6,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed just in the last 2 months. Random violence, fear, and lawlessness are ruling the day. People cannot leave their homes. Vicious thugs and vigilantes control the streets where people are pulled from cars, where they are tortured and executed.

Do not bother calling the police. They have been infiltrated by militias and are brutally corrupt themselves. One Sunni sheikh laughed as he said this about the police to the New York Republic: ''The good ones just take bribes . . . the bad ones rip off your head.''

Monday's New York Times cited an Iraqi Army official who notes that in a recent attack some of the gunmen wore the uniform of the Iraqi Security Forces. As he put it, ''You cannot recognize your friend from your enemy.''

To those who insist that all hell will break loose if our troops leave, I say hell has already broken loose. How much worse can it possibly get, and how many American lives must we endanger for a civil war that we are virtually powerless to stop?

I am not saying that democracy will be busting out all over once the last American soldier takes her last step on Iraqi soil. But we cannot begin the process of putting Iraq back together again until our troops come home. Every day that the occupation continues will make it that much harder for the United States to play a constructive nonmilitary role in Iraq as a construction partner rather than a military occupier.

□ 1600

If you will recall, the architects of the earlier Iraqi war and the resulting occupation did not just promise us democracy in Iraq. According to their fairy tale, an invasion was going to have this glorious ripple effect, spreading peace and freedom across the Middle East. These were Vice President CHENEY's words in 2002.

Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart, and our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced.

Of course, this week's open hostilities between Israel and Lebanon have proven that statement tragically wrong. The Iraq war hasn't spread freedom anywhere. It has made all of us, Iraq, its neighbors, the United States and the world, less safe.

There is no question, we have reached a point of diminishing returns in Iraq. In fact, the bloodbath in Baghdad has only gotten worse in the month since we moved more troops into the capital as part of a security crackdown that we called Operation Forward Together.

You know how the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results? Well, last week, General Casey said that we might need still more troops to contain the violence in Baghdad. This is madness, Mr. Speaker. Our soldiers were not trained for this. They are largely powerless to control hostility that is rooted in a religious conflict that dates back centuries. It is time to bring them home

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

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

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF STAFF SERGEANT DUANE DREASKY

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life of Staff Sergeant Duane Dreasky of Novi,

Michigan, and mourn his passing. Staff Sergeant Dreasky proudly served in the 1st Battalion, 119th Field Artillery Regiment, of the Army National Guard in Lansing, Michigan, and he devoted his life to serving our country.

As a student at Walled Lake Western High School, he enjoyed studying military history and playing football, but dreamed of serving his country as a soldier. Despite being a versatile athlete who wrestled, ran track, sky dived and taught martial arts, Staff Sergeant Dreasky suffered a knee injury, which threatened to prevent him from serving in the military.

In March of 2000, Staff Sergeant Dreasky married his best friend, Mandy, who served in the United States Army. When Mandy was deployed to Iraq in 2003, Staff Sergeant Dreasky transported members of her unit to Wisconsin for training and helped loved ones communicate with soldiers overseas. Finally, after writing to elected officials about his desire to enlist, he was able to join the National Guard in June of 2003.

After basic training, Staff Sergeant Dreasky served in Cuba before voluntarily deploying to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. On November 21, 2005, an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle near Habbaniyah, Iraq. He sustained severe injuries and was transported to the burn center at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for treatment.

Wrapped in medical bandages and unable to stand, he struggled to salute President George W. Bush, who visited him in the hospital. With his father, Roger; mother, Cheryl; sister, Dawn; and Mandy by his side, Staff Sergeant Dreasky never lost his patriotism.

For 8 months, Staff Sergeant Dreasky fought courageously for his life, but ultimately passed away on July 10, 2006. His legendary commitment to his family, community, and country is a testament to his enduring and selfless love. Staff Sergeant Dreasky is remembered as an inspiration to the citizens of Michigan, a soldier of unyielding dedication and a hero. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, during his 31 years, Staff Sergeant Dreasky enriched the lives of everyone around him. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and honoring his contributions to our community and our country

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

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

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim Mr. EMANUEL's time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to point out that last Friday, the New York Times had an ad on the editorial page, the title of which was ''True Energy Security,'' and it says as a subheadline, ''Interdependence is the Surest Means of Protecting Against Energy Shocks.'' This ad was paid for by the largest energy company in the world, ExxonMobil.

I called the New York Times to figure out how much money ExxonMobil had to pay for an ad in that newspaper to tell us how wonderful it is that they are charging us such high prices and that America is truly dependent on imported fuel. Believe it or not, that ad cost $44,037.

I started to calculate if I gave several people in my district $20 gas coupons based on the $44,037 that they spent just on that ad in that one newspaper to try to get into our minds and turn around in our heads what is actually happening and make us think they are doing us a favor, I could have over 2,000 families in my district be able to save money through those coupons.

This company made so much money last year, it blew the lid off Wall Street. They made the largest profits in the history of the New York stock market, billions and billions and billions of dollars. And are they lowering gas prices for our people? Never. They are raising them. And then they are telling us we should feel good about it.

In fact, the ad says that the answer to energy security is interdependence. I wonder how much they had to pay a firm on Madison Avenue to invent that word? Because our country was not founded on interdependence on oil regimes. Our country was founded on independence. Independence, not interdependence.

If you look at what is happening with our imports of petroleum, they now consume the largest share of our trade deficit with the world. Two-thirds to three-quarters of the gasoline you buy comes from petroleum that was refined from imports. That means your money, your hardearned money, is going somewhere, in the case of ExxonMobil we are talking about Saudi Arabia. And if we really look here at the last 20 years, every single year the amount of imported petroleum has gone up, to the point where now, in 2006, it is about three-quarters.

America has lost her independence. Independence.

I am giving this Special Order tonight because I want the American people to think about what it will take to become independent again; what it will take on the part of the leadership of the President of our country, this Congress, to help move us to a new energy age.

In rural America, we know there are new biofuels on the horizon. Why isn't our government helping our butanol, our ethanol, our biodiesel producers, to guarantee their investment for 30 years, as we did when we set up rural electric and rural telephone across this country, so that small farmers can band together and have some sense that some big company like Exxon isn't going to come in and squash them if they try to put a gas pump in a town and then ExxonMobil, who is so much bigger, can come in and put a gas pump right next to them, cut the price in half, because there is no competition by these oil cartels?

We need this government to help the American people transition to a new energy age. So many farmers across this country can't raise the security, they can't raise the investment dollars in and of themselves. The hurdle is too high. We need to have the kind of leadership Franklin Roosevelt gave us when we set up rural telephone and rural electric across this country and have a new rural energy initiative that would help America just in that sector modernize quickly, in the area of hydrogen fuels, in the area of new types of turbines.

My goodness, we invest so much money in research across this government, that ought to be at the top of everyone's priority list. Yet the Secretary of Defense said before our committee, well, Congresswoman, energy independence isn't my job.

What a wrong answer that was. The Department of Defense buys more petroleum and more imported fuel than any other organization in this country, public or private. The Department of Defense ought to be leading America into energy independence again and unhook us from our dependence on oil regimes

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IS AMERICA BECOMING ANOTHER ROME?

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from North Carolina.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, this Hall that we work in every day is lined with 23 marble busts of great lawgivers that influenced American law. We have Hammurabi, Gaius, Justinian, Napoleon and, of course, Moses over here in the very center. But one of those people you won't see up there is Caesar Flavius Valens.

Let me take you back 1,642 years, Mr. Speaker, and let's talk about a little bit of history. Caesar Valens controlled

the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire at this time in the year 364 wasn't just Italy. It controlled all the area to the Balkans, the Mediterranean coastline, including North Africa, France, and even Spain and part of what is now England; and the Caesar of the Roman Empire at this time was Flavius Valens. He controlled basically the eastern part of the empire.

And while he is Caesar, the barbarian nation of the Goths to his northeast started coming toward the Roman Empire. The reason was because the Huns, another barbarian group, had taken over the Goths' land and moved them toward the Roman Empire. So they migrated toward the Roman Empire, and at the time that this occurred, they came on the border.

They were led by a person that was supposedly a friend of Rome, his name was Fritigern, King of the Goths, and he asked permission to come into Rome with some the Goths.

Normally the Roman Government would not allow this, to have a state within a state; but, you see, Valens needed more people to be in his army and he needed more workers in the Empire of Rome. So he granted permission for some of the Goths to come in legally. But when the crossing started, the Roman Government didn't have enough border guards to control entry, and so massive waves of Goths came into the Roman Empire.

What started out as a controlled entry mushroomed into a massive influx. Several hundreds of thousands came across the Roman Empire.

But the Goths did not take the oath to support the emperor. They did not assimilate. They did not become Roman. And a few years later, this state within a state revolted and internal war started.

It culminated at the Battle of Adrianople. Most Americans don't know where that is, but that is a place over in that area. It was the Waterloo for Valens. And the Goths and other barbarian groups assembled and took to the field. Of course, one of the Goth leaders was a person by the name of Fritigern, this supposed friend of Rome.

The battle ensued and the Goths, with their large confederation, engaged the Roman cavalry. The Roman cavalry left. The Roman infantry was annihilated. Over two-thirds of these thousands of legionnaires were murdered, and Valens, of course was killed.

I have a coin of Valens, it is about 1,600 years old. He is not on our wall. I just have this coin of him, and just his head, because that was all that remained of him after the Goths executed him, cut his head off, put it on a stake and marched around the Goth camp.

Rome negotiated with all Goths and allowed them permanent status on Roman soil, and historians say this is one reason for the eventual fall of Rome, to allow a state to come into their state and refuse to make them assimilate. And in 410, the Goths sacked the City of Rome.

History speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker. Failure to control illegal entry into a country causes some problems, and we are not talking about legal entry. We are talking about illegal entry. And it encourages a state within a state. And when people come illegally to a nation and refuse to take allegiance to that country, start sending money to another nation and they don't even learn the language, is America asking for trouble? Is America becoming just another Rome?

Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons for the fall of Rome, but one of those reasons is simply the failure to control who came into their nation. I think the analogy is obvious.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1615

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

REAL SECURITY PLAN FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, tonight Representative VAN HOLLEN and I will be discussing one of the core issues of national security, and that is energy independence.

National security is the core function of our government. For most of our history as a Nation, bipartisanship governed American national security policymaking. In the words of Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican, ''Politics must end at the water's edge.''

A succession of American Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Harry Truman to Dwight Eisenhower to Ronald Reagan guided this Nation through two world wars and the tense decades of the Cold War. Their leadership was based on asserting America's power in a way

that advanced the ideals of our founders, and which made America a beacon to millions of people who were suffering under fascism and communism.

Most importantly, these men knew the limits of any one Nation's ability, and they saw the wisdom of marshaling our strength with that of other freedom-loving people. They listened to the counsel of our allies and members of both parties here at home.

The current administration has too often believed that it has the answers and does not need to pay attention to the ideas of others. This refusal to listen to other voices and an excessively partisan and ideological approach has resulted in an America that is more isolated than at any time in the postwar era.

Around the world, among nations that should be our strong allies, we are less often seen as a force for good in the world, and this has jeopardized the cooperation we must have to win the war on terror. This has been most clearly seen in Iraq, where insistence on invading the country without the broad international coalition we assembled in the Gulf War, and then our brushing aside offers of help from the international community, have seriously undermined the war effort and increased the burden that our troops and our country must bear.

But Iraq is not the only challenge facing our Nation. The ongoing crisis involving Israel, and Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists, Iran's standoff with the international community over its nuclear program, and a similar faceoff with North Korea are all competing for the attention of American policymakers.

In each of those crises, America's ability to marshal international support and use the full range of our power to effect a positive outcome has been undermined by the administration's ineffective stewardship of our national security. Democrats have developed a comprehensive blueprint to better protect America and to restore our Nation's position of international leadership.

Our plan, Real Security, was devised with the assistance of a broad range of experts, former military officers, retired diplomats, law enforcement personnel, homeland security experts and others, who helped identify key areas where current policies have failed and where new ones were needed.

In a series of six Special Orders, my colleagues and I have been sharing with the American people our vision for a more secure America. The plan has five pillars, and each of our Special Order hours have been addressing each of them in turn: Building a military for the 21st century, winning the war on terrorism, securing our homeland, a way forward in Iraq, and achieving energy independence for America, the subject of Ms. KAPTUR's recent 5-minute speech.

During our first Special Order we discussed the first pillar of our plan, building a military for the 21st century. To briefly summarize what we discussed 2 weeks ago, here are the elements of that pillar: Rebuild a state-of-the-art military; develop the world's best equipment and training, and maintain that equipment and training; accurate intelligence and a strategy for success; a GI bill of Rights for the 21st century; and strengthening the National Guard.

We next discussed a comprehensive plan to win the war on terror, which focused on a wide-ranging series of strategies to destroy the threat posed by Islamic radicalism. This involves destroying al Qaeda and finishing the job in Afghanistan; doubling special forces and improving intelligence; eliminating terrorist breeding grounds; preventative diplomacy and new international leadership; securing loose nuclear materials by 2010; stopping nuclear weapons development in Iran and North Korea.

The job of securing our homeland remains unfinished. In the wake of 9/11, there have been numerous commissions and investigations at the Federal, State and local level as well as a multitude of private studies. All of them, all of them, have pointed to a broad systemic and other flaws in our homeland security program.

Almost 2 years ago, the independent 9/11 Commission published its report, but most of its recommendations have yet to be implemented. Our homeland security plan requires the implementation of all of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. It provides for the screening of all containers and cargo.

It safeguards our nuclear and chemical plants. It prohibits outsourcing of ports, airports and mass transit to foreign interests. Trains and equips our first responders and invests in public health to safeguard Americans.

In early June we discussed our plan for Iraq, a new course to make 2006 a year of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty, with Iraqis assuming primary responsibility for securing and governing their country with a responsible redeployment of U.S. forces. Democrats will insist that Iraqis make the political compromises necessary to unite their country and defeat the insurgency, promote regional diplomacy, and strongly encourage allies and other nations to play a constructive role.

For the remainder of today's hour, we will discuss the fifth pillar of Real Security: Stable, reliable, affordable sources of energy are crucial to the U.S. economy and to the global economy.

To ensure such a supply, I believe developing cleaner sources of energy and encouraging energy efficiency and conservation must be among the Nation's top priorities. Members of both parties in Congress and the administration must work together toward a pragmatic and comprehensive strategy to secure American prosperity in the 21st century.

Democrats have long advocated increased investment in the search for alternative fuels and the development of energy-efficient technology. Today European and Asian competitors are already developing technologies that will reduce fuel consumption and lower the emission of green house gases.

Rather than American entrepreneurs, it is our competitors who are prospering from these developments. By marshaling America's great strengths, our innovativeness, our technological prowess, our entrepreneurial spirit, we can better secure our Nation, save our environment, and become the world leader in this cutting-edge industry.

In pursuing energy security, we must use the Nation's resources effectively. The Real Security Plan directs the national investment to areas that minimize economic risk while maximizing the potential benefits. It also aligns incentives for American consumers with the goals of our Nation.

It makes transparent the true costs of energy and ensures that the easy choice for Americans is also the right choice for the Nation. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of energy as a national security issue.

To achieve this vision, the Real Security Plan offers fresh policy ideas. These ideas are drawn from a broad range of stakeholders, academic experts, government administrators, energy industry executives, environmentalists, and a vibrant grass-roots community.

The Real Security Plan pushes the Federal bureaucracy to overcome its business-as-usual approach and it encourages American entrepreneurs to innovate. While many of the ideas are new, some have been around for years. For example, experts have for many years recommended updating the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency or CAFE standards. This year even the majority on the Government Reform Committee stated in a report that the fuel economy standards have stagnated for years.

Unfortunately, while the President has talked about the Nation's addiction to oil, he has failed to take the simple action of updating the CAFE standards. The President may believe that fuel efficiency standards are a burden on American manufacturers, or a constraint on the American consumer, but, sadly, he has underestimated American ingenuity and the willingness of Americas to sacrifice in the war on terror.

In contrast, in 1961 President Kennedy announced his vision for the Apollo project to put a man on the Moon in one decade, by saying, ''I believe that this Nation should commit itself to achieving the goal before this decade is out.

''But I think every citizen of this country as well as the Members of Congress should consider the matter carefully in making their judgment, to which we have given attention over many weeks and months, because it is a very heavy burden. And there is no

sense in agreeing unless we are prepared to do the work and bear the burdens to make it successful. If we are not, we should decide today and this year.

''This decision demands,'' he said, ''a major national commitment of scientific and technical manpower, material and facilities, and the possibility of their diversion from other important activities where they are already spread thin.

''It means a degree of dedication, organization and discipline, which have not always characterized our research and development efforts. It means we cannot afford undue work stoppages, inflated cost of materials or talent, wasteful interagency rivalries or a high turnover of key personnel.''

You might recall, in speaking of the Apollo project, President Kennedy also said, ''We do this not because it is easy, but because it is hard.''

This is the sort of leadership we need today on energy, and the level of commitment that we must be prepared to make, and we must ask of the American people. Unfortunately, this President has not asked the American people to sacrifice in the face of war or in the face of our tremendous challenges.

I would now like to turn to my colleague, Representative VAN HOLLEN of Maryland, who has been a very outspoken leader on national security, in general, on energy independence, in particular. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. SCHIFF from California, for his leadership in bringing us together to discuss these very important national security issues. We are very pleased to be joined today by Congresswoman KAPTUR, as well, who is very well versed in the issue of energy security and energy policy. It is wonderful to have her with us on the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I think America understands that energy security is a very important part of our national security. But if we are going to address energy security in a meaningful way going forward, we need to do it in a new manner. We cannot just be doing the same old thing.

Now, I think many of us were pleased back in January when the President delivered his State of the Union address, and from the podium right behind Mr. SCHIFF, he said to the Congress assembled and to the American people that the United States was addicted to oil.

In fact, his exact words were: The United States is addicted to oil which is often imported from unstable parts of the world.

I am pleased that the President finally acknowledged that. That was kind of the headline in the newspapers the next day.

The confusing thing, I thought, was that most of America already knew that we were overly reliant on oil, especially on foreign oil. But it was news that this administration had begun to at least acknowledge that problem.

The question is, having acknowledged the problem, whether we are serious as a Nation about doing something about it. Unfortunately, if you look at the record to date from the Bush administration, despite the rhetoric he gave at the time he addressed the United States Congress, we have not seen the follow-through in terms of a new plan. And we need a new direction in energy policy.

For example, that night he talked about the fact that we need to do more in the area of renewable energy, which we do; as you, Mr. SCHIFF, have said, that many of us have been pushing for for many, many years. But I think we all remember that it was not long after the President gave his State of the Union address that he flew off to the National Renewable Energy Lab out in Colorado, part of NOAA, and discovered that in fact the budget that he was submitting the day after the State of the Union address actually cut about 40 employees who were working on renewable energy at that lab.

And so the difference is really the one between actually doing something about an issue or just talking about an issue.

□ 1630

Because when you submit a budget the day after your State of the Union address, in which you say that the country is addicted to oil, and we have got to do something about it, and you submit a budget that cuts individuals' pay at one of the greatest national labs on that issue, in fact, the one that the President chose for his photo op on this issue, you know there is some kind of miscommunication between the guys who write the speeches and the guys that actually are putting the budget together which reflect the priorities of our Nation.

Clearly, the priority in that budget wasn't to follow through in a new direction on energy policy. In fact, unfortunately, what we have seen is the same old, same old. We have an energy policy bill that some people say will help wean us off our dependence on oil, but a major feature of that bill is to provide more taxpayer subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

Now, I have got to believe that the American people are scratching their heads and saying, what's wrong with this picture? I just went to fill up my car with gasoline. We have record prices at the pump. The oil and gas industry is making record profits, and yet you, the United States Congress, under this Republican leadership, you are taking some more of my taxpayer money and saying to the oil and gas industry, gee, even though you are making record profits and gas prices are through the roof, we are going to give you some of our constituents' taxpayer money as additional incentive for you to go out and explore and drill for oil and gas.

What happened to the free market? What happened to the notion that here we want to make sure that the market works? In fact, we are taking money from our taxpayers to subsidize an industry that needs absolutely no subsidy. They are making record profits. In fact, the President announced that we have to break that addiction. If you want to break an addiction, the first thing you need to do is acknowledge you got a problem. Then you got to do something about it.

Providing a greater subsidy or additional subsidies to the oil and gas industry, when you have acknowledged, as the President said, that we are addicted to oil, does exactly the opposite.

Mr. SCHIFF. This sounds a little bit about the equivalent, if you are dealing with someone with a substance abuse addiction, to give them a subsidy to buy the contraband that is the subject of their addiction.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, that is exactly right. Let us say you had an alcoholic. The last thing you want to do to help that person kick the habit is to provide a subsidy, for example, to the alcohol industry to make more alcohol at different prices. So we have got a real contradiction here between what we now acknowledge should be our national priority, a national priority, and what we are actually doing about it.

That is why I think it is very important that we are here today to talk about a new direction, because I do believe that if we want to really help break that addiction and reduce our reliance on oil, we need a large national effort. That is why many of us have joined together to introduce the new Apollo Energy Act, which says we need to harness the great potential of this Nation, the grant entrepreneurial spirit, and make sure that we commit ourselves to this real national effort, in addition to the fact that we need to encourage, not just more renewable energy, but in the immediate short-term we can also encourage greater energy efficiency.

We waste an awful lot of energy as a Nation through inefficient use of energy. So the Federal Government has tried and gave us a push to try to encourage States and local jurisdictions, the American people, to find ways to improve energy efficiency. But if you look at the President's budget with respect to energy efficiency efforts, you see dramatic reductions in the budget that he submitted for that purpose.

In fact, Diane Shea, who is the executive director of the National Association of State Energy Officials, has said that the assistance that the States received from the Department of Energy is not going to be available this year as it was in the past. This year, the year after the President stood at this podium right here in this Chamber and said this is a national problem, we have got a national addiction, we have got to do something about it.

Yet he reduced the efforts that we had put in place and were trying to develop to try to help people with energy

efficiency, because we know that if we can use energy more efficiently, obviously, then we need less to produce the same output and the same quality of life.

So if you look at all of these different areas, you just find a growing gap between what the Bush administration says it wants to do and what it is actually doing. It is a credibility gap that is growing. I think the American people recognize that fact, and they are looking for an alternative that is real.

That is why we have developed what we call a real security plan, not a fake one, not one where you say one thing and do another, but a real plan, which really makes the national commitment to this effort in many, many different areas.

The new Apollo Energy Project is part of that. A project to provide greater efforts in the area of ethanol is part of that. A whole series of concrete steps that are in a proposal that is put together through a consensus by many experts is part of that. We need to act on that proposal, and we need to start acting today if we really want to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, improve our national security situation, and improve our environmental situation and address the issue of global climate change, which we necessarily need to address as well.

I would be happy to yield to our colleague, Ms. MARCY KAPTUR, and thank her for her leadership on this issue.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank our colleague from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) for their own energy and helping America shape a different century and different millennium in this 21st, and to say that there could be no more important dedication for us as public officials than to meet America's chief strategic vulnerability in imported petroleum with real answers. To do so, as Congressman SCHIFF reminded us, when President Kennedy helped to do what was hard and lead America to land a man on the Moon, it was done within 10 years.

At that time, I remember as a child, it seemed so impossible to land a man on the Moon. Yet now we see space shuttles. When you stand outside and look at the sky, and you watch the shuttle come before the Moon and then go back around again, you may see what this Nation has achieved since the 1960s.

But, indeed, we did land a man on the Moon in 10 years. I am troubled by the long-time horizon on new forms of energy, because if the government of the United States were serious, within 10 years it could use its own power to help convert this Nation.

I will just discuss two of the committees on which I serve that have major roles to play in this conversion. Both Congressman SCHIFF and Congressman VAN HOLLEN have talked about the Department of Agriculture.

What Congressman VAN HOLLEN has said is true, that although the President, in his State of the Union, talked about energy addiction and the importance of transitioning America to be energy independent, the cost-cutting budget of the Department of Agriculture, under his administration every single year, has cut funds for renewables.

Farmers struggle in the rural communities across this country to try to piece together the investment dollars and have the confidence that what they are doing will weather the kind of beating that they will take from the oil cartels, who command the marketplace and control the price in this country. Please don't try to convince me it is a free market. Oh, no, it is only a free market for those who control the spigots.

It isn't a free market for the consumer at all. Because in the community I represent, even if I want to buy a car that runs on ethanol, there is only one pump, and that was only put in after considerable pressure. Who has time to go way over to another part of the State or another part of the city to go fill up, with families having the pressures that they have on them in the workplace today?

No, the Department of agriculture, although I authored the first title to a farm bill in American history, title 9, that has the ability to invest some dollars in renewable energy through the farm community, it is such a pittance. It is almost laughable, except it is all we have. There isn't any major division over at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, even until today, that deals with energy independence and bringing up the full array of renewables.

We know about ethanol, because ethanol is derived from corn, and corn is heavily subsidized. So, of course, we are going to get more alcohol from corn. But you know the truth is, in terms of science, that isn't the crop with the most oil, with the most ability to be refined. There are other seed crops that have much higher oil content. We have just never developed them.

So the Federal Government isn't in the lead on this in agriculture. It is actually following in the wake of real progressive States like Minnesota, which I call the Thomas Alva Edison Center of the 21st century. What they are doing, they are viewing new energy production and new renewables and new investment there as economic development for the State of Minnesota.

We have a lot to learn from them. The Federal Government ought to just copy what the State of Minnesota has done and make it available across the country. But it is a tragedy now because even though Detroit makes dozens and dozens of vehicles that will run on these new renewable fuels, there are no gas pumps around the country.

There were a few incentives in one of the bills that we passed here in terms of tax credits and incentives for companies to put in tanks in the ground, but it is not serious. It is just sort of limping along. It isn't the kind of great challenge President Kennedy gave to us and the challenge that the Nation met.

If I could just say a word about the Department of Defense, it is incredible that the Secretary of Defense of this Nation would come before the Defense Appropriations Committee, when asked the question, what role did he see for his Department, the largest purchaser of petroleum in the United States of America, and petroleum-based products, to help erase this strategic vulnerability that we had due to the fact that we import three-quarters of our petroleum, he said, That is not my job. That's the Department of Energy's job.

I couldn't believe it. I went up to him afterwards, and I said, well, if it isn't our job, why do we have our Fifth Fleet porting in Bahrain holding up that government? You start looking around where we have put our defense forces to protect the oil lanes. We had a vote here today on Oman. It is pretty clear the Strait of Hormuz is very strategically important to us, because we are totally dependent on that oil lifeline.

To me, that is America's chief defense vulnerability. So why doesn't Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld know about it? He doesn't want to know about it. Know what, the generals know about it. The generals at the Air Force know it, the generals at the Navy Department know it. The generals over at Army know about it, and they know about the soldiers in the field.

We have research projects going on at DOD to try to have solar tents where the sun's rays are used if we have to move battalions around and try to provide alternative ways of powering these different defense systems that we have in theater. People on the ground know. The Guard and Reserve know. America has to change.

I hope the Secretary or somebody in his office will give him some of my remarks, because the Department of Defense ought to be in the lead. Then many of the other Federal agencies will follow.

The Federal agency that deserves the biggest star for doing what is right is the postal service. The postal service, with its vehicles, and some of them only get 12 miles a gallon, we ought to convert those, has done more than any other Federal agency to use its power to try to use vehicles that run on new fuels, batteries, new technology, hybrids, which Congressman SCHIFF and Congressman VAN HOLLEN have referenced in their remarks.

The Federal Government itself, as major a share of the U.S. economy as it is, could do wonders. Would it not be great if the President had hybrids as part of the White House lineup? Wouldn't it be great if the Secretary of Defense could see his way to thinking about this and integrating the energy mandate into what the Department of Defense does?

Wouldn't it be great if the Secretary of Agriculture actually helped the

farmers of this country become owners in the new energy industries that are being created across the fields of Minnesota, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana and so many other places, rather than making these farmers struggle and be threatened with bankruptcy because they can't, they don't have all the connections on Wall Street, and they can't get up to the $40 million level for investment?

So I thank the gentleman for giving me a chance to say a few words here this evening. I share your absolute commitment to energy independence by 2020 or even sooner than that.

□ 1645

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the gentlewoman for all her leadership on this issue, and you alluded to the free market and the operation of market forces. That is not always as free as it might appear, particularly in the price at the pump. But there have been several obstacles to our energy independence, what has been a lack of vision in terms of where we need to go as a country in the administration and in the Defense Department, as you point out, but there have also obviously been within the oil industry efforts to stop this from happening.

I have to imagine the best and quickest way to bring oil prices down is to make other sources of energy competitive. If we can incentivize the development of these biofuels and make them more readily available, the oil companies are going to drop their prices in a hurry in order to undercut this new industry, if nothing more.

But what really kind of gnaws at me is when we look around the world at what China is doing with solar power and solar cities now, at what South American countries are doing at making themselves energy independent with biofuels, and what Japan is doing in terms of development of hybrid technology and how they are passing us by, that really grieves me because it hurts our national security interests. It hurts our economy.

Let me do a reality check with Mr. VAN HOLLEN's district which is 3,000 miles from mine. If I ask my constituents, would you be willing to make a sacrifice so that you could tell the oil producing Nations of the world, many of which are not our friends, we do not want your oil, we do not need your oil, you can take your oil and whatever, my constituents would leap at that. How would your constituents feel?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I think despite the fact there are 3,000 miles between the area you represent and the area I represent, that is certainly one of the things that brings our constituents together. I think what they are all looking for, regardless of where they live in this great country of ours, is some real leadership on this very important issue.

This House just a few weeks ago had another opportunity to send a statement on the fact that we wanted a forward-looking energy plan with a new direction or whether we just wanted to go the same old, same old.

Our colleague, Congressman MARKEY of Massachusetts, offered an amendment. It said let us put an end to another subsidy to provide for deepwater drilling for oil and gas. In other words, and I just want to make this clear, in other words, taking funds from our constituents and providing it to the oil and gas companies effectively in the form of a subsidy so that they can drill for oil and gas.

Now, even this administration said they were against this particular subsidy, but not the leadership in this House, not the Republican leadership in this House. It went right out of this House because, unfortunately, the Republican leadership is still in the old frame of mind that we can just keep doing what we used to be doing rather than moving in a very new direction.

I would like to pick up briefly on our point that our colleague here, Ms. KAPTUR, made with respect to the issue of the Federal Government leading by example.

It is hard for all of us to ask people around this country to do things in the area of energy efficiency when the Federal Government itself has been such a deadbeat on this. The Federal Government, after all, is the largest single consumer of energy in the United States and yet, again, after the President gave his State of the Union address, he submitted the fiscal year 2007 budget, and that was the lowest request ever for Federal Government energy efficiency efforts. In fact, that was lower, despite the fact in 2004 the Federal Government consumed more energy than at any other time in the last 10 years.

So, again, I get back to the point, you got to say what you mean and you got to follow through.

Here was another example. This is the day of the State of the Union address, the budget came down, and yet the budget came down, the President, head of the executive branch, submitted a budget that reduced funds for energy efficiency programs in the Federal Government. That is not leading by example.

Part of our new directions program is we say we will ensure that the Federal Government will be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Mr. SCHIFF. I wanted to make one comment and I have a question for Ms. KAPTUR.

When we talk about sacrifice during the War on Terror, really the only people in America who have been asked to sacrifice are the men and women in uniform and their families, and they are sacrificing big time; multiple deployments to Iraq, to Afghanistan, families left behind, wondering if their loved one is going to come back at all, come back in one piece, how to make ends meet while they are gone.

I met when I was in Iraq a young man serving there who was on his way back home. His wife was also in the service. She was on her way to Iraq. They were going to be like two ships passing in the night. The level of sacrifice of the men and women in uniform is nothing short of outstanding.

Outside of that group, though, Americans have not been asked to sacrifice for the greater good, but we are sacrificing in an unexpected way, and that is when we go to the pump. We are paying a heavy price. The problem is that the price we are paying is not going for any productive gain.

Yes, we are paying a lot more at the pump. But where is that money going? It is going in two places. It is going into the record profits that Mr. VAN HOLLEN mentioned, which it is not just record profits for the oil industry. The oil companies have had the largest profits of any corporation in American corporate history, and these are the same companies that are enjoying the tax subsidies that we keep passing. And yes, the market is allowing them to take these profits. It is not compelling them to. It is not compelling them to charge that price at the pump, but it is giving them the opportunity to, and they are taking it. So part of the money is going there.

Where else is the money going? Well, a lot of the money is going to the Middle East. A lot of it is going to countries that, either openly or covertly, are funding people who are trying to kill us. That is not a worthwhile sacrifice for Americans to make. And the terrible tragedy of this is. And I think probably the biggest missed opportunity of this administration is if we had started 5 years ago, or even after 9/11, and we said we are going to make the sacrifice now to wean ourselves off of oil, we might have had to pay a little bit more in terms of our conservation measures, but that money would be an investment in our security. Now we are paying 10 times as much, and it is going to some of the people trying to kill us.

What I wanted to ask Ms. KAPTUR, I know other countries in South America, for example, have gone a long way in terms of using biofuel, have made themselves energy independent, have done what we have not been able to do. If we did have the right package of incentives, if the government was a leader and worked with the agriculture industry, how much of our domestic consumption of energy could be supplied by biofuels?

Ms. KAPTUR. I think the honest answer to that is initially about 15 percent. If one looks at the current type of production where we have field crops, if we compare ourselves to Brazil where they have many fewer cars than we do but they are really heavily biofueled right now, they have got well over half of their vehicles that are running on alcohol-based fuels. Under current technologies and current types of plants that we use, and current refining capacity, I think we could get up to about 15 percent.

I do believe that with biotechnology and the introduction of more oil-rich seed crops we could push that number up, and that is part of the horizon of cracking the carbohydrate molecule, as we in the 20th century cracked the carbon molecule to produce gasoline and refine it off of petroleum.

We are really neophytes in terms of really using oil seeds in order to produce the maximum number of Btus per acre and per ton. So I think if one looks at the period of a decade, we could do an enormous amount surely in the areas where we have field crops already in production.

I would say that for the future, the Midwest would have a larger share of its vehicles that run on alcohol-based fuels than perhaps California. California might have more of a mix of hybrid battery technology, maybe hydrogen-infused systems. I do not think that there is just one answer here.

But right now, because the oil companies really lock out the biofuels at the pump, we cannot move the vehicles that are already being made and sell them. Most Americans who are driving these flex-fuel vehicles do not even know it. So I would say that biofuels is at least a fifth of the answer, and then we have to look to fuel cells. We have to look to hydrogen-infused systems.

I think that in the future, we are working on one project in the Midwest, we are taking the rays of the sun and converting them to hydrogen. Then we will have the plug-in vehicles, the experimental plug-in vehicles.

So there is a series of technologies being used and developed. But imagine if the Federal Government were a partner rather than just sort of a bystander in this effort. We could ratchet up the usage so much more quickly.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank you very much for your leadership on this, and it seems to me there is maybe no other issue that is as cost-cutting, as energy independent and has such a positive synergy, since that to the degree we could wean ourselves off of foreign oil, that helps us with our national security and our foreign policy.

To the degree we can develop these new technologies, that helps us economically. There has been tremendous demand in China, India, and elsewhere that are energy-starved countries with strong GDPs. So it is an economic winner.

In terms of our environment, not sending all of those ozone-depleting gases and the greenhouse effect and the global warming, it is an environmental imperative.

In terms of rescuing the family farm and helping our agriculture industry, it could be a vital part of the answer.

Almost every challenge we face as a Nation intersects at the intersection of energy independence. Now, some people point at other solutions, and I want to ask the gentleman about this.

Probably the most prominent debate we have on energy kind of tells you where we are here is on drilling in Alaska. From my point of view, that does not make much sense, both in terms of how long it would take to extract the oil, the environmental costs, but I wanted to ask your thoughts on that.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, the gentleman is right, and I think the statistics on this are clear, that even if you took all the oil you could possibly drill out of Alaska, with all the costs and the environmental damage, it would deal with only a very short period of 1 year, less than 1 year, a couple weeks to months in terms of our total energy use.

So if you are trying to break an addiction, you do not keep feeding that addiction. What you need to do is have a different approach in general.

□ 1700

As Ms. KAPTUR has said, it is not just one different thing, it is many different technologies and different ideas that you need to work on. But what you don't do if you want to kick a habit is keep encouraging that habit to remain. And yet that is what we have been using so much of our natural resources to do. We should not be using taxpayer money to do the oil and gas subsidies. Rather, we should be using our efforts to encourage these other ideas that are in our national interest.

The President has said we have a problem. That is not the issue, apparently. But the issue is what are we doing about it. That is why I think this discussion is important.

I really do believe it is a terrible thing when so many of the others around the world are ahead of us in so many areas where we should be leading the way. We have a great entrepreneurial spirit. We have the resources and talents to do this. There is no reason why other countries should be beating us in the area of renewable energy development and energy efficiency technologies. And yet they are. I think that is because of a lack of national leadership. Other countries have made this a priority. In this country we have made it a priority for sound bites, but we have not made it a priority for policy.

Ms. KAPTUR. Coming from the industrial Midwest, I think I have more automotive plants in my district than the entire State of California has, so I come from an area where the automotive industry was born and hopefully is being reborn. But it is amazing to me the way in which the U.S. automotive industry chose to meet foreign competition. It was not to try to pry open Japan's market which remains closed to the goods of all countries. Even when the old Yugoslavia made Yugos, you couldn't get them into Japan. So less than 3 percent of the cars on their street are from anywhere else in the world, the second largest auto producer in the world.

They did not really choose a strategy of opening up closed markets or of converting here at home the largest automotive market in the world through the intervention of more fuel-efficient vehicles. They were forced to do that by CAFE standards and so forth here. But they fought that every step of the way and forced on the American people choices that were very, very oil-consumptive choices. So SUVs came on the market, and yet you could look over to Europe and see a Mercedes diesel run on biodiesel operating over in Europe.

Yet here we had something like the Hummer comes out, and it gets 9 miles to a gallon at a time when we know that we have to have more fuel-efficient vehicles.

I had an interesting experience a couple of years ago. I went up to the Detroit auto show, and I said I would like you to show me the floor with the new flex fuel or the biofuel vehicles, and the salesman just looked at me.

We really don't have the industry well focused yet in terms of, look, Americans want to change the country. These are the vehicles that are available to you. This is how we are going to make it easy for you to convert. They are still not there yet. They have globally forced on the American market the big gas guzzlers. But if you go anywhere else in the world, whether it is Brazil or Germany, anywhere you go, you see the more fuel-efficient vehicles being employed.

Think about your church parking lot or think about the supermarket parking lot that you shop in, and just go and look and see what is in the lot and what people are buying and what the miles per gallon is, and then do the same thing in Italy and do the same thing in Japan and do the same thing in Brazil and say to yoursel, What is wrong with this picture? Why aren't Americans being given the very same choices as consumers in other countries? Why have they been able to be more fuel efficient than we are?

And if I can say just one thing on solar energy, since I represent the solar energy research center of the Nation, we make solar panels at a third of the cost of the Japanese, and they are just as efficient. In fact, they are more efficient, but they are bigger. Because they are bigger, they are one-third the cost. All of the companies in my district that are making these solar panels, they are being exported to Europe because Europe has the special incentives for renewable applications. And the majority of the technology on solar roofing and solar panels is being shipped to other countries because we don't have those same incentives here.

So our government, those in the leadership here, can't see their way forward to help America convert when she wants to. The American people are with us on that. They know we have to change. Why don't we make it easy?

Mr. SCHIFF. That is one of the things that drives me crazy. One of my staff just got a Toyota Prius. She had to wait 6 months to get that Prius. There is a 6-month waiting time to get a hybrid made in Japan.

We don't have a nonSUV hybrid yet that I am aware of, an American car out on the road that competes with the Prius or with the Honda Civic hybrid. Why is it that some of the foreign automakers seem to know the American market better than we know ourselves?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. If the gentleman would yield, I understand your confusion, and I share that. I think it has been so shortsighted that we as a Nation didn't take the steps that we needed to take many years ago in this regard in terms of updating in a significant way the CAFE standard, the corporate average fuel economy standards in this country.

When gas prices started going up over the last many months, all of a sudden you saw people running around with their heads cut off, trying to think of quick-fix solutions.

You had the majority leader of the Senate, Senator FRIST, he floated this idea of a $100 rebate to every American, as if that was somehow going to solve the problem. Quick fixes are not going to solve the problem. We need serious solutions.

One of the things that should have been done years and years ago was updating the CAFE standardS. It is interesting to hear Members of Congress who have been here for a long time, I listened to Senator LOTT and others on the other side talking about this. They said, Gee, you know, if we had known what we were going to see today in terms of gas prices, we would have supported an increase in the CAFE standards back then. Well, you know, we don't all have crystal balls, but we have to exercise our best judgment.

And the fact of the matter is that is a long overdue measure. And it is not a quick fix because it takes time for the fleet of cars to turn over. You can't just change the corporate average fuel economy standards today and, presto, have a result. It requires some forward thinking.

The fact that we didn't do it before was a big mistake, and I think people should hold people accountable for their mistakes. On the other hand, it is better late than never. We need to get moving on that, and we need to get moving on the whole menu of other options that we have been discussing today. There is no silver bullet to this. You need an array of options. You need a number of efforts going on at the same time.

But in order to get all of those things going, you need one essential ingredient, and that is some leadership and a commitment to this issue and a commitment to have a new direction and not just rely on the failed policies of the past that continue to get us into the mess we are in.

Mr. SCHIFF. The gentleman is exactly right. We have this choice. We have had this choice for several years. We can have more of the same, more of the same $3.50-a-gallon gas, maybe $4-a-gallon gas at the pump, more warming of the global environment, more production of greenhouse gases, more pain economically in terms of higher energy costs for businesses.

Or we can have a new direction. I think we have talked about several of the ingredients of that new direction tonight. The investment of biofuels: That helps our farms and it helps our economy, it helps our energy independence, and it helps our energy independence and our national security.

Investment in other alternative energy sources like solar power where the profit points are almost there, almost there for a great expansion of solar power. They just need a little incentivization before they can be broadly employed.

The development of windpower, geothermal, and the whole host of renewable energy sources. This is the new direction we need to take this country in. Otherwise, every time we have a flare-up in the Middle East, as right now we are having this tragic situation, Hezbollah has attacked Israel, kidnapped soldiers and prompted this conflagration of the region, gas prices are going through the roof.

Iran thumbs its nose at the international community and says we are going forward with our nuclear program, gas prices go through the roof.

Hurricanes in the gulf take out refining capacity. We can't predict, as you say. We don't have a crystal ball. We don't know next year if it is going to be a hurricane, or next year it is going to be the Middle East, or the Venezuelan head of state who is anathema of the United States, but we do know it will be something. And if we don't take action to change the direction of our country to a new direction, we are going to be continuing to be funding a lot of the people that are bent on our destruction.

Ms. KAPTUR. I just wanted to add that if one looks at the automotive industry, and I have all major companies in my district and in my State, and talking about their focus along with our focus, we have to continue to open closed markets of the world. That's where markets expand. You have to put some energy there. You can't just kind of put it on the back shelf.

Many years ago President George Bush the first went to Tokyo. I still remember he got very sick at a dinner, and he was there for auto parts talks, market opening talks. And ever since that day, there has never been an aggressive effort by any administration to open up the second-largest market in the world. So we have failed on the trade front significantly.

And the major automotive firms have chosen a low-wage strategy rather than an innovation strategy. So they have been moving plants around the globe seeking cheap labor, whether it is China, Mexico, wherever it is, rather than focusing on the innovation that is inherent in the American people that was responsible for the dawn of the automotive age in this country in the first place.

Those kind of minds are still out there, but we are kind of wed to old technology and the fact that if you sell a very large vehicle in this country, you make a little more profit than if you sell a smaller vehicle. The larger vehicles use more gas and petroleum-based products. We were stuck in that mold for a very, very long time.

And if you go out and ask the average consumer what they are looking for, and the lines are showing it, they are looking for the new technology, and it just was not brought on.

So the strategy that was chosen in the 1980s and 1990s has not led our Nation toward energy independence in vehicles. Now we see ads on television by the big companies saying we are trying to catch up. Well, we really need to catch up very, very quickly or they are going to become another segment of our wealth that are purchased by foreign interests and no longer belongs to us. We are seeing a lot of that as we pawn off pieces of America to try to cover our long-term debts and what we owe to the future, which I am very upset about, but alone can't solve.

Nonetheless, I think our automotive companies really need to focus on innovation, listen to what the consumer is saying, give them what they want, and open up the closed markets of the world. That would go a long way to helping this industry revive. And then we have the legacy costs of the companies that have been in existence for a very long period of time that this Congress could do something about in order to make whole the pension and health benefits that workers were promised. That is a whole other Special Order.

I thank Congressman SCHIFF and Congressman VAN HOLLEN for allowing us to speak about such an important subject and one that is at the top of the list in terms of domestic security, and that is energy independence.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on this issue and on so many other issues here in the Congress.

I want to wrap up by bringing this back to where we started, and that is the integral nexus between energy independence and national security. You can imagine what a positive to our national security policy it would be if in our dealings in the Middle East, our dealings with Russia and China and our dealings with South America, if energy was not an issue in the sense we were not dependent on other parts of the world, and particularly the Gulf States. What a transformative effect that could have in a positive way on our national security policy. Energy independence is really key.

Our new direction, as outlined by real security, is energy independence by 2020. This is an achievable goal. It would require the kind of commitment that President Kennedy talked about when he talked about the Apollo project, but it can be done.

I have great confidence in the American people and the American entrepreneur. We can do this. It would eliminate our reliance on Middle Eastern oil. We would increase production of alternative fuels in America. We would promote hybrid and flex-fuel vehicle technology in manufacturing, and we would enhance energy efficiency and conservation incentives. This is the direction Democrats feel we need to bring this country in order to make sure that our security is in fact very real.

I want to yield to my colleague from Maryland for his closing remarks and once again thank you for not only this evening, but for all of your work on the national security plan.

□ 1715

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague, Mr. SCHIFF from California, again, for his leadership. And I think we have covered a lot of territory in this hour. I think we will have a continuing conversation here in the Congress, and I am sure we will have a continuing conversation throughout the country about this very important issue.

And, again, it goes to the question about whether we take our words seriously in terms of moving the policy of this country forward. And you can't have a situation where you have the President say this is a national priority, on the one hand, and then have a budget that comes down the next day that sends a very, very different message because, if you do that, number one, you lose credibility with the American people; and, number two, you obviously can't achieve your objective if you don't harness some of our national resources to this very important, very important effort.

So I want to thank my colleague for his leadership on this issue. And I hope that in the days ahead, this Congress will move from a position of rhetoric on these issues to actually doing something meaningful and taking this country in a new direction when it comes to energy policy, which, as we have discussed tonight, is such an important component of our national security policy as well. So I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue.

THE ORIGINAL MISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, before I get to the topic that I want to spend at least the lion's share of the next hour on, I want to respond somewhat to the commentary from my friends on the other side over the last hour and really agree with them on a whole lot of issues.

As the cochairman of the bipartisan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus here in the House, which has over 218 members, a majority of the House belong to our bipartisan caucus. Congressman MARK UDALL of Colorado is the Democratic cochairman, and I am the Republican cochairman; and we are working together to advance many of the initiatives that they have talked about as quick as we can.

I do think that tremendous energy now is put behind the goal of becoming energy independent as soon as possible in this country.

Last night, Congressman UDALL and a bipartisan group that I participated in met for about 2½ hours with Vinod Khlosa about this issue of cellulosic ethanol and what potential it has in this country for transportation.

Earlier today I participated with Congressman INGLIS of South Carolina, who chairs the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Caucus here in the Fuel Cell event we had in Cannon Caucus.

Just a few days ago we had the Renewable Energy Expo here, which Congressman UDALL and I participated in. Through all of these efforts, I would say that what we are doing is not this particular technology or that particular technology, because in many ways our free enterprise system is going to sort the winners and losers out.

But, really, our position is we have got to do all of the above. Time is of the essence. I don't think we can pick and choose right now. We need domestic capacity, so we have to go after new oil and gas resources. But we have to wean ourselves off foreign oil and move towards advanced transportation systems.

Clearly, hybrids are a bridge. We want to promote that. But we have got to move through all these technologies.

I think fuel cells have great applications but, frankly, so do the E85-based fuels.

So I just want to say that that is something that many Members from both sides of the aisle are doing an awful lot about.

Last summer the Congress passed EPACT, the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This President signed it into law. Today we hailed, many people in a bipartisan way, the successes that the tax incentives give to the renewable sector, to the fuel cell sector, to the advancement of hydrogen. I would argue that we need to go further because the production tax credits that are in that bill need to be extended for a longer period of time so that the industry out there has a definition. They know what to expect. It is not a 2-year thing that might or might not be renewed. So clearly, we need to do more.

But there is bipartisan resolve to advance all of our energy sources as rapidly as possible. And so I applaud them in a sense, but I would also say that there is no silver bullet. We need to do all of the above, and we can't just rely on particular fuels. We need to increase our domestic capacity.

Now, to lay the groundwork for what I am going to talk about, with the help of a couple of my colleagues, Mr. MCCOTTER from Michigan has joined me already, and I think the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) will also join us.

I want to talk a little bit about world events, but then get to the meat of this hour, and that is the United Nations and whether or not it is living up to its original charter, whether or not it is a viable organization today, or whether or not, frankly, it has been corrupted over time, especially in recent years.

But I want to say, to begin with, that I think to define this war that we are in as a war on terror misses the point in many ways. Terror is a tactic that our enemy is using, but it is not really a war on terror. We need to be honest that we are at war with the Islamic jihadists. The jihadists are spreading their networks around the world.

A letter between Zarqawi and Zawahiri laid out specifically that they wanted to use our involvement in the Middle East as an opportunity to remove the infidels from Iraq, and then expand the califate, according to Mohammed, from Morocco in Northwest Africa, all the way into Indonesia. Clearly, aggression is part of the plan.

And the jihadists don't just surface through al Qaeda. The jihadists surface through Hezbollah, frankly, a seasoned terrorist organization that has now taken up a very important place of power in Lebanon, supported, without question, articulated last night on the floor of this House, by Iran and Syria.

Democrats and Republicans, over and over again, last night, as we debated the resolution in support of the State of Israel, talked about who is backing Hezbollah right now. Hamas, also elected to governmental leadership in Palestine, includes the jihadists, people who have declared war on the United States of America and its ally, Israel. And this really is a war of global proportions. And we need to be realistic about this and share with the American people the seriousness of the moment that we live in and rise to our generational call to address this issue and not just think that this is about Iraq.

If we pulled out of Iraq tomorrow, Islamic jihadism is on the rise. And they continue, as we see in Lebanon, to seek to destroy the State of Israel and seek to drive America back and bring us to our knees. We must stand tall and straight.

Now, the United Nations is an organization that I believe was founded with good intentions. As a matter of fact, a prominent Tennessean named Cordell Hull was very involved with it. And if you call the Congressional Research Service or look for the records of all this, and we did, you find out the history of all this, because Cordell Hull came out of the State of Tennessee. He was elected to Congress in 1907. He served here in the House until 1931. He was elected United States Senator, but

resigned upon his appointment as Secretary of State by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933.

Foreseeing danger to peace in the rise of dictators, he advocated rearmament, pled for the implementation of a system of collective security, supported aid short of war to the Western democracies, condemned Japanese encroachment into Indochina, warned all branches of the United States military well in advance of the attack on Pearl Harbor to prepare to resist simultaneous surprise attacks at various points.

Although Hull participated in some of the policy-making conferences of the allies, his major effort during the latter stages of World War II was that of preparing a blueprint for an international organization dedicated to the maintenance of peace and endowed with sufficient legislative, economic, and military power to achieve it.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war, Cordell Hull proposed the formation of a new world organization in which the United States would participate after the war. To accomplish this aim, in 1941 he formed an advisory committee on postwar foreign policy composed of Republicans and Democrats. Mindful of President Wilson's failure with the League of Nations, Hull took pains to keep discussion of the organization nonpartisan.

By August of 1943 the State Department had drafted a document, entitled ''Charter of the United Nations,'' which became the basis for proposals submitted by the United States at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference.

Poor health forced Hull to resign from office on November 27, 1944, before final ratification of the United Nations charter in San Francisco. President Roosevelt praised Hull as the one person in all the world who has done his most to make this great plan for peace, in effect, a fact.

Following nomination by Roosevelt, the Norwegian Nobel committee presented the 1945 Nobel Prize for peace to Cordell Hull in recognition of his work in the Western Hemisphere for his international trade agreements and for his efforts in establishing the United Nations.

Too ill to receive the award in person, Hull sent a brief acceptance speech that was delivered by the United States Ambassador to Norway, in which he wrote: ''Under the ominous shadow which the Second World War and its attendant circumstances have cast on the world, peace has become as essential to civilized existence as the air we breathe is to life itself. There is no greater responsibility resting upon peoples and governments everywhere than to make sure that enduring peace will, this time, at long last, be established and maintained. The searing lessons of this latest war and the promise of the United Nations organization will be the cornerstones of a new edifice of enduring peace and the guideposts of a new era of human progress.''

As a matter of fact, the U.N. charter preamble says this: ''We, the peoples of the United Nations, determine to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and reaffirm faith and fundamental human rights in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. And for these ends, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. And ensure by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods that armed force shall not be used save in the common interest, and employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.''

Now, that is a bold plan for an organization, to secure international peace and guarantee international security. And I just want to say, fundamentally, a fair assessment of the United Nations in 2006 on its original mission is a low grade. If not an F, it has got to be a low D, because the United Nations today, as was written yesterday in a column by Norm Ornstein in Roll Call, is effectively impotent in certain areas of the world today.

Clearly, as we look at the observers in southern Lebanon and the U.N.'s role with peace keeping, we are facing the most difficult challenges of our generation with respect to war and peace, and the United Nations is not effective anymore. That is the sad truth today, and we are trying to change that.

Here in the House of Representatives, we passed the Henry Hyde United Nations Reform Act and sent that bill to the United States Senate, where we can't even get agreement on a conference report. As a matter of fact, that bill said that there were 38 recommendations for reforming the United Nations to clean up the graft and corruption, make it more efficient and accountable, have it live up to its original charter; and unless 31 of those 38 reforms were implemented, we were going to, the United States of America, withhold up to 50 percent of our dues to that organization. And we are, and will show later in this hour, by far and away the number one contributor to the United Nations in the world.

□ 1730

We were trying to bring some accountability to the United Nations, and I have to tell you that the resistance to that accountability not only comes out of the heart of the United Nations, but there is resistance even in this country for reforming the United Nations.

I have to say this Member of Congress from the State of Tennessee, much like the Member of Congress from Tennessee who received the Nobel Peace Prize for starting the United Nations, looks back on the legacy of Cordell Hull and, sadly, says that we need to reevaluate our participation in the United Nations as long as it is going in the direction that it is going in.

Before I yield to the gentleman from Michigan, I want to point to a book that has been written, called The U.N. Exposed, by Eric Shawn.

Eric Shawn is not an author trying to make money writing a book. Eric Shawn is a very legitimate journalist who has been incredibly effective over the years at reporting on the United Nations. It is very similar to a reporter covering city hall that sees so many things going on in city hall that, after a long period of time, they just kind of look themselves in the mirror and say, this stinks and somebody needs to write about it. And this book documents all of the graft, corruption, deals, inefficiencies, arrogance that exist at the United Nations. The U.N. Exposed. And I want to just read a page out of it in the introduction to set the stage and then yield the floor to the gentleman from Michigan.

In the introduction it says: ''Terrorism is not a United Nations priority. The majority of its members are focused on 'development,' '' which is ''diplomat-speak'' for increasing the amount of money coming into their own nations. Terrorism, even though it should be the most pressing international issue of the 21st century, is simply not on most U.N. agendas.

''The United States is compromised. The United States funds a whopping 22 percent of the U.N.'s $3.6 billion budget, pays 27 percent of an additional $3.6 billion in peacekeeping operation costs, and provides billions more for the U.N. agencies and related operations each year. And yet the United Nations has become the coliseum for confronting and opposing the United States. With the end of the Cold War and the rise of one lone superpower, the United States' veto-wielding rivals press their agendas at our expense and maneuver for their own advantages, not ours.

''The United Nations Security Council guaranteed security for the Iraqis and an unstable and untenable environment for American and British forces attempting to enforce the Council's mandates from 1991, when Saddam surrendered in the Gulf War, to the 2003 invasion made necessary by the U.N.'s malfeasance. Had the Council and the United Nations held to moral principles and enforced their resolutions and requirements, the war could have been prevented. There would have been clarity, not confusion, regarding Saddam's possessions of weapons of mass destruction. His corruption and bribery of the Council created conditions of uncertainty that empowered his regime.

''The same mistakes are now being repeated elsewhere. The U.N. is incapable of effectively resolving the nuclear threats posed by Iran and North Korea, member states that have in some cases lied to U.N. officials, including those of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or, in other cases, ignored their request.

''While the U.N.'s humanitarian programs are rightfully praised for providing food, shelter, and medicine to millions of the world's needy, they have now also come under questioning and criticism. The U.N.'s own independent investigation, headed by former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker found that even the gems of the U.N. system, such as the World Food Program, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF, operated in Iraq with 'little transparency and oversight' amid evidence of 'gross mismanagement.' ''

A fair assessment says the United Nations is not effective at all in international peace and security and they do provide humanitarian assistance, but even their provision of humanitarian assistance is grossly mismanaged, and basically everybody involved in the leadership of the United Nations is, in one way or another, benefiting financially from the very programs that come through the United Nations.

We are going to document even more of that as we go on. But at this point I want to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, THADDEUS MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding.

I am here as a Representative from Michigan. And as many of you know, and I am sure you do, Mr. Speaker, Senator Arthur Vandenberg from Michigan played a key role in bringing the United States into the postwar world. He originally started out of Grand Rapids as an isolationist. And yet as he saw the gathering clouds of World War II and the impact of isolationism and appeasement upon the course of world events, he quickly became a believer in the United States' role in the world, and not simply being in the world itself and going along with the tide of history but trying to direct that tide of history towards a positive outcome for our own citizens and for humanity.

This is why today, as an admirer of Senator Vandenberg and, yes, as an admirer of President Roosevelt, we have to admit that today the dream of President Roosevelt has been turned into a nightmare by the corruption of the United Nations.

The dream which President Roosevelt inherited from President Wilson and his League of Nations, a torch that President Roosevelt carried throughout election after election, despite its being many times unpopular, has been put in the hands of people who operate the United Nations not as an entity to bring about global peace and prosperity and security through mutual diplomatic action but rather as a corrupt political machine. In fact, the United Nations has one advantage over a traditional municipal political machine. It is that the enormity of their crimes tends to mask their crime.

The global scale of the theft, which the gentleman from Tennessee will soon help to elucidate, has masked the simple fact that they are operating in their own interests rather than the interests of the citizens of the United States and rather than the interests of people throughout the world.

One of the things which is most striking, as the gentleman pointed out, is the fact that when we look back upon the search for weapons of mass destruction by the Security Council and the resolutions that were passed and passed and passed, and ignored and ignored and ignored, is the simple, ineluctable fact that Saddam Hussein had bribed the jury, that Saddam Hussein had taken the Oil-for-Food program and turned it into an instrument not only for his aggrandizement and enrichment at the expense of starving people in his own nation, he also utilized it to buy influence amongst member countries at the Security Council level.

When viewed in that light, it is easy to see why there was such discord and such incomprehensible division amongst former allies and erstwhile allies in the buildup to the invasion of Iraq by the United States to liberate that country from Saddam. It is also easy to see why, in so many other instances when dealing with the dictator, it was very difficult to get the U.N. to take a stand and to commence action to enforce its own resolutions.

As the distinguished ranking member of the International Relations Committee, Mr. LANTOS of California, has pointed out, the United Nations is a derivative reality. As he points out, it is a derivative reality in the sense it is composed of member states. And member states can be bad actors on the international stage or good actors on the international stage, and when they come together, the results can often be less than productive.

But in the end, it is not the position of myself or many in the United States who are encouraging U.N. reform that the U.N. do what we ask it to do or that it be led by the nose by the United States of America and back us in all our diplomatic efforts.

But what we are trying to do, through the Henry Hyde bill and through other attempts legislatively, is to guarantee a fair and impartial hearing amongst the Security Council and amongst the member states and know that when we make our case that we will not be greeted by a bribed judge and jury, but that we will be greeted by other sovereign nations acting objectively in the best interests of world security and world prosperity.

It is this chance that we were cheated of, and it is this chance that we are endeavoring to restore because endeavoring to restore the integrity to the United Nations, we are endeavoring to rekindle the spark of the dream of Franklin Roosevelt and the entire postwar generation that hoped that the horrors of the Second World War would not be lost upon future generations, thus condemning them to a third world war. Arguably, that chance has already been lost.

Regardless, we must press ahead because the United Nations as a concept, as an ideal, has a very practical value in the world today. And I think it is very difficult for us not to confront the reality that it is not performing that function, largely due to its own corruption.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his commentary.

What is the United Nations? To a lot of people, they may not have been there, they may not realize it, but it is an 18-acre compound on the East River in Manhattan, in New York City. And that 18-acre compound, which is very much delineated, detailed in Eric Shawn's book, is basically a safe haven for everyone who operates there. They are immune from virtually everything. They do not even have to pay sales tax on the food that they eat in New York City. They do not have to pay their parking tickets. They operate with such impunity that they, frankly, have become incredibly arrogant toward our country.

The number two guy at the United Nations, Malloch Brown, recently just delivered a scathing analysis of the United States' position toward the United Nations as if we had no business whatsoever meddling in their organization, as if we should not in any way exert oversight when, again, about a fourth of all of their revenues come from us and they have this autonomy here in our country.

The Oil-for-Food scandal, which an investigation was ordered on here in the Congress, it showed such gross graft and corruption that it could very easily be the largest case of grand larceny in the history of our country in terms of the billions of dollars that were siphoned off and used to manipulate, to effectively bribe member countries; even, as one of the chapters in the book shows, the media, the press that covers the United Nations, setting up these organizations where reporters could actually draw income from outside of their work at the United Nations. Now, if that is not a conflict of interest for a journalist, I do not know what is.

But Saddam Hussein methodically set out to use the revenues from the Oil-for-Food scandal to keep the countries that could very well force the United Nations or hold the United Nations back from going in and enforcing their resolutions in Iraq. He used the money. It was a scheme. It was a scam, a multibillion-dollar scam. That has been documented here on the floor, but

I do not think the people in this country ever really got it. I do not think that they fully understood it.

A summary of the time line, after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations barred him from profiting from sales of his country's vast oil supplies. The ban was meant to keep him from rebuilding his military and pursuing a nuclear weapons program. It also deprived the Iraqi economy of its main export, leading to hunger and deprivation among his people, according to him, a condition that Saddam both exacerbated by hoarding the wealth his country possessed, and then publicized to win international sympathy. Eric Shawn's book points to the fact that a lot of it was just propaganda coming out of Iraq by Saddam that, indeed, a lot of the children that he had claimed were starving to death because of the lack of oil revenues were not, in fact, starving to death. But he won a lot of international sympathy.

So support for the sanctions gradually eroded. And in 1996 the United Nations created the Oil-for-Food program through which Iraq could resume oil sales to pay for humanitarian goods such as food and medicine. Saddam exploited, though, the renewed oil flow in three ways:

First, he simply ignored the sanctions and illegally sold oil to Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and other countries with no U.N. supervision, which furnished him by far his biggest source of illicit income, about $13.6 billion, according to a Senate subcommittee investigation.

Second, Saddam and his loyalists used tricky pricing schemes, surcharges, and kickbacks to milk another $7 billion or more from oil buyers and sellers of humanitarian supplies as a result of Saddam's successful arguments at the United Nations, that as a sovereign nation Iraq should be allowed to negotiate contracts directly.

□ 1745

Legitimate Iraqi oil profits went to a U.N.-controlled escrow account, but kickbacks were secretly routed by complicit companies to hidden regime bank accounts.

And, third, Saddam bribed foreign officials and others. He oversaw a list of people who were given vouchers to buy Iraqi oil at below market price, essentially multimillion dollar buyoffs. Their apparent purpose was to win Saddam defenders in his fight to lift U.N. sanctions. Beneficiaries allegedly included oil company executives from Russia, China and France and prominent politicians from Russia and France.

There is documented evidence now that he systematically sought to use this revenue to buy basically the votes at the United Nations to keep the United Nations from enforcing their own resolutions.

So was the United Nations corrupted through the Oil-for-Food scandal? Absolutely it was. Over a period of a decade, it was corrupted in a gross way, so that the United Nations was never going to enforce their resolutions because basically everybody in the decision-making process had some obligation to Saddam Hussein because of where the money flowed.

Kofi Annan runs the United Nations. Thankfully, his term is going to end at the end of this year. His son, Kojo, his fingerprints are all over this stuff. Money flowed. Investigations have been run. People just looked the other way. Malik Brown then criticizes us for exerting oversight, saying that the United States has just become anti-U.N.

Listen, we all believed in the original legitimacy of the United Nations, the original mission, international peace and security. But I will tell you what, the United Nations is, if anything, not only not helping with international peace and security; the United Nations is in the way today sometimes of international peace and security if they are unwilling to enforce their own resolutions.

You might say, well, you know, if it is not the United Nations, then what? I got to say the coalition of the willing needs to reevaluate, in my humble opinion. The coalition of the willing means countries willing to fight Islamic jihadists, willing to stand strong against terror, willing to engage, to say we have to drive this threat back.

Then what do we do? Let's look at an expanded NATO. Let's look at a coalition of the willing. Or let's insist that the United Nations go back and meet its original charter. It is, frankly, not an organization worthy of this level of support by the American people today. That is the bottom line.

Now, I am prepared to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina, if she is ready. Are you ready?

Ms. FOXX. I am ready.

Mr. WAMP. I yield to VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. WAMP. I appreciate your inviting me to be with you all today. It is a real treat to listen to you and Congressman MCCOTTER. The things you have said I agree with wholeheartedly. I am not nearly as eloquent as the two of you. I am a much more plain-spoken person, I think, a product of having grown up in the mountains of North Carolina, and I think that in many ways you are being very kind about the United Nations.

I agree with you that the United Nations was born in a spirit of optimism and that people had hoped very much that the United Nations could provide peace and stability in the world. And we all want that. We all want that to happen.

But I will tell you, as I talk to my constituents and as they talk to me about the United Nations, even the average American, you don't have to serve in Congress, the average American knows that the United Nations has failed miserably in its role as a peacekeeper in this world. All we have to do is look at what is happening right now in Lebanon, what is happening in Israel, to know that it has failed miserably. We would not be having the problems that we are having in the Middle East if the United Nations were doing its job. I think that it is high time for the Congress and the administration to demand a great deal more from the United Nations.

I think that our Secretary of State is doing a fabulous job in her job, and I think that it was a sad day when we could not get Ambassador Bolton confirmed by the Senate to his job, and I think that the President was right to appoint him on an interim appointment and that he is speaking for the majority of the American people and saying the kinds of things that need to be said.

I want to quote HENRY HYDE. Again, there are very few people in this House who are as eloquent as Chairman HYDE, and I think that it is entirely appropriate that the bill that he introduced, the United Nations Reform Act, was named for him. I want to just quote one quote from him relating to that bill and relating to the United Nations:

''No observer, be they passionate supporter or dismissive critic, can pretend that the current structure and operations of the U.N. represent an acceptable standard. Republican and Democrat administrations alike have long called for a more focused and accountable United Nations. Members on both sides of the aisle agree that the time has come for far-reaching reforms.''

I think that the comments, again, that have been made here by my esteemed colleagues have set the stage for some of the things that we ought to be talking about. The United Nations charter has laudable goals, but, as I said, I am a much more plain-spoken person than some others. But when the rubber meets the road, the U.N. has failed miserably to put these ideals into practice, especially in recent years. And we have a duty here in the Congress and as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, the United States, we have a duty to insist on a higher standard. We have a duty to ensure accountability of each and every American taxpayer dollar that goes to the United Nations.

I know my colleague is going to point out some of the problems with the U.N. ''supervised'' Oil-for-Food Program. But I want to say that from that program, to the lack of action with respect to genocide in Darfur, Sudan, to the tremendous human rights abuses by the U.N. peacekeeping staff during their mission to Congo, the U.N. is absolutely rife with fraud and abuse and needs reform.

We could list these things, and there is a long list, and I am going to talk a little bit about the history of scandals in the United Nations: the Oil-for-Food Program, we will talk a little bit more about; the peacekeeping operations; the Center for Human Settlement or Habitat; Settlement Rehabilitation

Program in Northern Iraq; UNICEF, the U.N. Children's Fund; the Conference on Trade and Development; the Development Program; the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Program; we all know UNESCO; the Electoral Assistance Division, meaning electing people, not electricity; High Commission for Refugees; the Office of Drugs and Crime; the Claims Commission; the Population Fund; and the Environmental Fund. Every one of these programs has had a scandal attached to it.

The American people are much more familiar with the U.N. Oil-for-Food dollars because, fortunately, the popular press and the popular media picked up a little bit on that program and have talked about it. But all of these programs have had scandals associated with them, and I think that just by highlighting this one program, we can give an example of what some of the others are.

I would like to come back in a few minutes and talk about some other issues that have been touched upon by Congressman WAMP, but I am going to turn it back over to him so that he can explain in some detail some of what went wrong with the Oil-for-Food dollars.

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentlewoman.

Put this in perspective: think like North Korea today. Kim Jong Il is defying the international will in terms of developing a nuclear program and nuclear weapons capabilities, so the world is rightly isolating him.

So back in 1990, Saddam Hussein invades his neighbor, and the world comes and drives him back and basically begins to isolate him and he can't sell his oil to the world.

So he comes up with a scheme. Hey, this is what we can do: we can claim that children are starving and that our country is experiencing all these humanitarian crimes, and, as a result, we have got to kick the oil revenues back in.

What happens is the $64 billion worth of oil revenues which Oil-for-Food was supposed to send through a New York escrow account and on back for humanitarian needs, and the administration associated with getting the money back there. And the way the thing ended up getting corrupted, it goes through Jordan and Lebanon and other countries and other accounts and back to Iraq, and this is what happens with the money: military equipment, weapons from Belarus, Bulgaria, China, France, India, Jordan, Russia, Poland, North Korea, South Korea, Syria, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. He bought with all that the military arsenal to put himself back on his feet in the nineties.

And who was co-opted into believing all that? The United Nations, very easily. How were they? Well, kickbacks. Bribes. A methodical effort to make sure that the very people that could expose this or stop this were all somehow on the payroll.

That is exactly what happened. It is one of the most outrageous stories in the history of the world, especially in an organization that most people have a good impression of. After all, when the light-blue flag of the United Nations shows up around the world, people think good thoughts. It is like the American Red Cross. They say, hey, that is nice, they are here. Little do they know, though, that there is this kind of fraud and abuse and corruption at the United Nations.

This is all documented now. We really need to evaluate how long this country is going to participate in a scam like this and then be criticized by the rest of the world every time we try to hold them accountable as being arrogant or too bossy, the things that they say.

Eric Shawn has done this country a service by putting all this in a document, his book, ''The U.N. Exposed.'' He really has. Again, he is just a journalist. He is just trying to show what he learned over the years reporting on the United Nations.

In an interview, they asked him about Iran, because we now know what a threat Iran is. Iran is backing Hezbollah. That is all about this war. And, frankly, Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, has denied that the Jews were ever put through the Holocaust. He says the Holocaust didn't exist, and he wants to end Israel. He wants to destroy Israel. That is a stated objective of the guy running Iran now.

All right. So they asked Shawn about the United Nations and Iran, and he says this: ''The United Nations has given Iran a 21-year head start in its development of nuclear technology, a country whose President now vows to wipe Israel off the map. It seems inconceivable, but the United Nations' own nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, didn't even know about Iran's nuclear facilities for 18 years. Then in 2003, after Iran's program was exposed, Iranian activists and the IAEA confirmed Iran's violations, it took another 3 years for the issue to even reach the Security Council. Russia and China served as Iran's linebackers on the governing board of the agency, refusing to allow Iran's infraction to be reported to the Security Council until earlier this year. The latest IAEA report details Iran's many violations, such as the existence of uranium metal designs that can only be used for nuclear warheads. Moreover, it also raises many unresolved questions about Iran's nuclear capabilities as a whole.

''Despite the crisis, Russia and China, whose economic interests clearly lie in protecting Iran, have already castrated the Security Council by declaring they oppose sanction, creating the impossibility of full council-backed action. Even a legally binding Chapter 7 resolution would not result in a vote for sanctions, a naval blockade or other action against Iran. It may require another coalition of the willing to effectively deal with what the Security Council is unwilling to achieve.''

He says in his book: ''It was not the U.N.'s effort that exposed the extensive global black market in nuclear technology peddled by Pakistan's Dr. A.Q. Khan. No U.N. committee ordered Muammar Qaddafi to surrender his weapons of mass destruction programs. Those successes are among the achievements of the proliferation security initiative, the brainchild of Ambassador John Bolton under the Bush administration. Compare PSI's actual achievements with the U.N.'s failure on the nuclear weapons front. Iran only has to look at Security Council's crippling by Saddam to understand why President Ahmadinejad calls the U.N.'s resolutions meaningless.''

That is the bottom line. Their resolutions are now meaningless. They have no credibility. Our enemies know that they have been co-opted and corrupted and bribed and that they are not going to enforce their resolutions. Iran now knows it. And so they just laugh off anything that the United Nations does.

How dangerous is that? Well, I would say the average citizen, not just in this country but around the world, they have confidence in the United Nations that the United Nations is going to somehow carry out its original charge of international peace and security.

□ 1800

I have been a Member of the United States Congress for 12 years. I am not an expert on these things, but I have studied them and I learned them. I have very little faith in the United Nations to do much of anything on international peace and security.

They do feed people that need to be fed. They do reach humanitarian needs. That is good. But that does not mean all of the other things that they do are good.

As a matter of fact, they are AWOL, AWOL, absent without leave, on the critical issues of terrorism and international security. They will not stand tall.

On the issue of human rights, what a disaster the human rights activities of the United Nations are today. They have put the fox in charge of the hen house. They have let some of the most egregious human rights violating countries play a prominent role in human rights decisions by the United Nations. How absurd is that? I yield to Mr. MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I am very happy, too, with Mr. Shawn producing this book, because I hope it brings light to the problems at the United Nations. I would also like to thank the gentlewoman for her kind remarks about it. Just because we are loquacious does not make us eloquent. And you certainly know how to make your point.

Aside from the international ramifications of the United Nations corruption, it would be very simple for Americans to say, well, what is the problem? We know that the world is not perfect. We know that an amalgamation of nations is not going to always act with

the proper rectitude that is expected or the proper perspicacity that is required under an international crisis.

Many people in my district and throughout America will say to themselves, well, the U.N. is corrupt. That is not news to us. We are not surprised that champagne-sipping, caviar-chomping globalists are making a mess of the jobs that we have entrusted to them.

But there are several points that are important. Even if we are tempted to shut out the ramifications for the world of the United Nations corruption, let us remember that we are paying for it. The United States taxpayers are the largest contributors to the United Nations.

Now, by any objective measurement, this is not a sound investment for the American taxpayers, given the current circumstances occurring at the United Nations, anymore than I would say that in 1900 Tammany Hall was a wise investment for New Yorkers.

My concern also is that these very people, not content with their misfeasance and malfeasance internationally, now wish to do something about your sovereign rights as an American citizen.

The U.N. continues to like to use international treaties, and as many of you know, when the United States signs a treaty, that treaty has more weight than statute, has more weight than State laws. They like to engage in coming up with conventions and conferences to come up with treaties that nations can sign and then be bound by and, consequently, their citizens governed by.

The United Nations has such incentives to deal with your second amendment constitutional rights. They have conventions that they would like you to sign to help reduce your ability to raise your own children as you see fit, to intrude upon every aspect of American life.

I think that that is insane for us to continue to fund an organizations that would like to destroy the Republic's consent to be governed through international convention while they make a nice buck off of doing it, and get to travel to all of the places that they like to frequent and hold these conventions, and, might I point out, not one of them is in Darfur or in North Korea.

The ramifications to the United States taxpayer in terms of their prosperity and in terms of economy of measures by the government, as well as in terms of their inherent sovereignty itself, is endangered by a corrupt organization that is bent on its own aggrandizement at our expense.

It is often frustrating to me, as someone who came out of Wayne County Commission, the Wayne County Government, which is very much like Cook County, Illinois, and politics in Chicago, as one of the few Republicans who got to watch a machine, a political machine at work.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be wise for the United States to continue to subsidize heavily a corrupt political machine. I do not think it is wise for us to subsidize it at all. I think that we should terminate it if it proves that the reforms that we are trying to achieve are impossible.

I think it is imperative that we continue to demand accountability from them. But I think it is also important, as Mr. WAMP from Tennessee and Ms. FOXX from North Carolina and others are trying to do, is to make the American public aware that this is not some esoteric exercise in international law. This is a direct threat to your sovereign, inalienable constitutional rights as an American citizen.

If we do not demand accountability from the United Nations, if we continue to allow the United Nations to believe itself, as a self-aggrandized harbinger and herald of a new world order, then we will feel the ramifications not only in places like North Korea and Iran and Iraq, we will feel those ramifications in Iowa and New Hampshire and Idaho.

That is why we are engaged in this discussion tonight. It is not only to decry and curse the darkness of the past, it is try to light a candle upon the unsavory activities of the United Nations, to try to engage the American public with an awareness of the realties of the consequences to them should U.N. reform not occur; again, in our own way, to try to start the journey of the thousand miles that is U.N. reform, and put that organization back on a track that will serve the people of the United States, that will serve the citizens of other nations, and will again rekindle Franklin Roosevelt's dream for that organization.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his participation and his contributions to our country. He is one of the most articulate Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, very bright man. I am grateful for his leadership. He talked about the U.S. paying 22 percent of the overall dues to the United Nations, and 27 percent of the peacekeeping operations around the world.

You know, China has the same Security Council power at the United Nations as the United States. China pays 2 percent of the United Nations dues. So at the very least, one of the reforms should be Security Council reforms on the balance of power.

Because, frankly, again I have been to the United Nations several times. They do not treat the United States well. And I do not understand why. I know there are a lot of excuses why. But I will tell you this. We are footing the bill and many other countries are not. And the ones that have the same kind of veto power through the Security Council need to be carrying more of the weight, especially when you consider the gross trade imbalance that our country now has with China.

It is not exactly like China needs a lot of help financially, they need to pull their weight. So I am prepared to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WAMP. I appreciate that very much. I would go even farther than you have gone in terms of talking about the amount of money that we have put into the United Nations.

I think that we should lower completely, to a very low amount, what we give to the United Nations. And if we cannot get other nations to increase the amount of money that they give, then I think that we should seriously think about withdrawing from the United Nations altogether.

It is such a corrupt organization. It does so little for what it should be doing, that I think that it is something that we definitely should give some thought to.

I want to go back. You mentioned the Malloch Brown speech. I really want to talk just a little bit about that, because I think that Malloch Brown's speech and the comments that he made are an indication of the fact that the members of the United Nations, people at the United Nations, are totally out of touch with the world.

You described the little spot of ground that the United Nations sits on. I have been there too, went there last year for the second time in my life. I went there as a young person to visit the United Nations, you know, thinking again idealistically about what the United Nations did.

I went there and took my grandchildren to show them the United Nations and get them to get a little bit of sense of what it is. But those people who come here from other countries I think really, really are out of touch. I want to make a couple more comments about what Malloch Brown said. I find it so ironic that he would come in and criticize the American people.

We are the only superpower in world. We are undoubtedly the most successful country in the world. And yet we are criticized by the Malloch Browns of the world, by almost everybody in the United Nations, for what we do. I find it so ironic that we provide so much of the money for the United Nations.

When you look around, you see that we are the most successful country in the world, and how these people can come in and criticize us for what we do. I want to say, our Ambassador Bolton said, it was a criticism of the American people. I think that that is absolutely true.

He criticized our people. I think that that is such an affront to us, and I think the American people understood that as an affront. And he chastised the Bush administration because we had not constructively engaged the American people in what good things the United Nations was doing. He is telling us we are too inadequate to explain that.

Well, the American people are very smart people. We are the smartest people in the world too, I think. They understand, rightfully, if the United Nations was doing what it was supposed

to be doing, its work would stand for itself. That is the kind of thing that we Americans understand.

I think that it is, aside from the fact that he was injecting himself into the political life of this country which he has absolutely no business doing, he really insulted the American people. And he insulted us.

I want to say that my recommendation would be on the United Nations, they are going to come to us and say they need a lot of money to renovate that old building up there. My recommendation is that they take the United Nations to the Sudan. They build a building in the Sudan, and they move the entire United Nations to Africa.

Then I would like to see how many of those people who are currently serving in the United Nations would like to move there and use their expertise to help Africa get out of the poverty that it suffers. I do not think you are going to see many of those people want to go there. They come here and they like to live the life that they live in the United States, but they do not want to respect what we do in the United States and how we have gotten to where we have gotten.

I want to thank Congressman WAMP for bringing this Special Order here tonight. I think you are right. We need to talk about this. What is going on in the Middle East right now is because of the failure of the United Nations, not the failure of the United States, not the failure of the Bush administration, not the failure of President Bush. It is the failure of the United Nations to keep peace in this world.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to keep the pressure on them to reform the way they do things, and if they do not, I think we need to get out.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for all she contributes here in the House of Representatives. Let me say in closing, this is not now a far-out wild kind of a position that we are taking.

You know, I am a very reasonable person, with friends all around the world. The last 12 years I have, through the National Prayer Breakfast and other ways, engaged friends all around the world. I am very much for us being engaged in the world, investing in the world. This is not a close-minded kind of a position. This is not a paranoid position. This is looking at the facts, really analyzing the bottom line of the United Nations. It is not meeting its mission. It has become ineffective, inefficient. It has lost credibility. The very people that are criticizing our country are enjoying the multimillion-dollar townhomes they live in in Manhattan. They enjoy the fruits of our free enterprise system, but they do not recognize the human rights and the responsibility.

The original charge of the United Nations was to ensure international peace and security. So I would just say if we want to be guaranteed international peace and security and sleep comfortably at night, we better not put our faith and trust in the United Nations. Put it in the men and women in the uniform of the Armed Forces of the United States of America and our allies who are willing to stand against tyranny and terror and destruction. That is the last best hope for freedom, not the United Nations.

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30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House here on this Thursday evening. As you know, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor daily to not only share with Members of the House, but also with the American people, issues that are facing our Nation and things and ideas that we have on this side of the aisle that can assist us in moving this country to a new direction.

Here in the House, as you know, we have been sharing, not only with the Members, but also with the American people a plan for a new direction for America, and a new direction that will be helping a number of Americans in their everyday lives, making sure that we have affordable health care, as it relates to fixing the issue on prescription drugs and as it relates to costs, also dealing with issues such as the minimum wage, making sure that American workers are able to receive an increase, just like we have received an increase here in the House of Representatives over a period of a number of years, year after year. We will talk about that a little further.

As you know, we have a plan here in the House, where we have been not only calling for a vote, but asking the Republicans to join us here and increase the minimum wage.

We want to increase it to $7.25 an hour. It is now $5.15. There are millions of Americans that are still, since 1977, not able to see an increase in minimum wage.

Also cracking down on price gouging, we have talked about that, we have tried to pass legislation on that. The Republican majority has blocked us from being able to do that.

The simple fact is, Mr. Speaker, the majority actually wins here in this House. Right now, that is the Republican majority, and it is important that folks understand that that is the case, and that we have the will and the desire to lead in that area and making sure that American people are able to receive an increase in the minimum wage.

Another issue, in putting America in a new direction, is making sure that we cut costs as it relates to student loans, cut interest rates in half and make sure that it is affordable for families. So many families are going to be sending their children off to college this fall. Some will not, because they can't afford it.

Student loans have gone up. Student aid has gone down. It is important that we look at that as it relates to building the next generation of leaders and making sure that we have an educated America, to make sure that parents and grandparents are able to see their children or grandchildren do better than what we have done academically, because of affordability, and also access.

Also making sure, ensuring that retirees can retire in dignity, protecting Social Security, making sure that it is not privatized, making sure that it is here for future generations is our goal. We want to make sure we are able to do that and being able to place America in a new direction.

Also, something that the Republican majority has failed to do is pay as we go, making sure that whatever we invest in that we show how we are going to pay for it. I think it is very, very important.

Mr. RYAN and I here this evening will point out a number of these issues that are not being addressed. But we have already made a commitment to the American people in housedemocrats.gov, in our commitment of putting America in a new direction, making sure that we meet the needs of everyday working Americans.

So with that, Mr. RYAN, if I can, I would be more than happy to yield to you, sir. It is once again a pleasure to be on the floor with you, to be able to hold a flag with the 30-something Working Group, to make sure that we share with the American people things that we are working on, will try to work on and will, if given the opportunity to, do so.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman. I always enjoy our afternoon sessions here much better than the late night sessions that we normally have.

But you made a point earlier that I think we need to expound upon, that is, the issue of debt and balancing the budget. You mentioned PAYGO.

One of the fundamental issues we need to get our hands around, as the country blesses us with the majority in the fall, is that we have got to figure out what we are going to do with this tremendous debt that we have.

We have, as a country, borrowed more, and you have a great poster up there, we have borrowed more from foreign interests in the last 5 years than every President prior to George W. Bush has in the last 224 or 225 years. That's a lot of money that we owe Japan, China, OPEC countries.

We don't have the money to be giving the tax cuts that we have, war spending, military spending. We don't have that money so we go out and borrow it. It is very important that we will do as a Congress, and the first few days that we are here as a Democratic majority,

is reimplement the PAYGO rules that were in place. Pay-as-you-go.

That basically means that as we pass a budget that we will not spend any money that we have to go and borrow. You either find the money from another program, or you go and raise the money somewhere else. But you don't just spend money on a program and have to go to China in order to ask them to loan you money in order to fund it. That is a fundamental difference that the Democratic Party adheres to as opposed to our friends on the other side.

With all due respect, their rhetoric is right on, balanced budgets, rein in government, smaller government. The rhetoric is all there is. If you look at the actions over the past 5 years, when you are borrowing so much money from China and Japan, you have got to pay interest on it just like your car or your home.

So this chart highlights for us the difference between the Democratic priorities and making sure you have money that you can spend, or not spend, as opposed to going out and borrowing it. This is the chart that highlights all of this.

The big red bar on the left is what we just pay on interest, on the debt, just interest. This isn't paying down the principal at all. This is just for interest, 230 or $235 billion will be spent in 2007 just paying down the interest on the money that we have borrowed.

It pales in comparison to the President's budget for 2007 in education, homeland security, and veterans. So we need to ask ourselves, what do we believe in as a country? Do we believe this is the right way to go? Do we believe that this is how we want to administer government, or do we believe we need to put back in the PAYGO rules, put them in place, make sure that this Congress, regardless of who is in charge, or who is in the White House, cannot go out and spend money that we don't have?

Now, what is frustrating for those of us in the 30-something Working Group is that we are going to spend a good part of the next decade trying to repair some of the major structural damage that this administration and this Republican Congress have caused. That is the botto line. It is not trying to embellish what the problem is, but this is it.

When President Clinton was in, and the Democrats passed our budget in 1993, without one Republican vote, that balanced budget led to surpluses and created over 20 million jobs.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I have a chart just like your chart. We have two of them.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. See, last night, you tried to one-up me with the chart, and now tonight you are copying my charts.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, you know, Mr. RYAN, I think the point needs to be made in such a way and I think the point needs to be made, and I asked for another chart to be made, so that you can have a chart and I can have a chart. We can talk about what is happening here.

In all seriousness, I think it is important that when you look at the interest, you can almost, as it relates to the blue, invest in education three times what we are paying on the debt.

When you look at homeland security, you got folks as well up here on the other side of the aisle talking about we have got to protect America. You have another chart. I wish you could pull that other chart out, because folks need to understand what we are talking about, because that is what we do here in the 30-something Working Group. We have third-party validators. That is the chart right there. I don't have one of those.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I will get you one.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But you look at that, and then when you look at veterans, and this second chart is so that we can take it. We can leave that chart on the floor. Because when we start talking about a Republican majority making history in all the wrong ways, this chart needs to go with us throughout this Capitol.

Do you know what we need to do? We need to put this chart and that chart, just like this one, outside of our office. That is what we are going to do. All next week, this chart and your chart that looks just like it, we will get an easel and put it outside of our office.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Then when we come down here, we will just take the chart from our office and carry it down here.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Bingo. Veterans, I have a lot of veterans in my district. I am going to tell you right now, Mr. RYAN, they are hurting. They are hurting because they are having to wait several weeks to see the ophthalmologist or podiatrist or whatever the case may be, because there is a back-up at the veterans administration. In rural America, which I don't represent, I represent a very urban area, Dade and Broward counties, two of the most populated counties in Florida, that veterans clinic is only open two and three times a month.

Veterans have to wait to go in and get what we told them we would give them, because they put their life on the line, some of their friends laid their lives down for us to salute one flag here today. But better yet, the Republican majority is still going out, putting it on a credit card, putting this country in debt that we have never seen before.

But even better, yesterday, they talk about, well, we have done this in homeland security. I think you have the facts there, but because this chart was so revealing, I want to make sure, and we will make sure that we have this out next week, which I think will be our last week in session before we break for August, have this out so Members can see it. We definitely want the American people to know what is going on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What this really illustrates is our plan, as we have it here before I get into the homeland security, our plan is, as we begin to rein in the spending from the Republican Congress, cut out the corporate welfare, with the Medicare part D, all the major subsidies that are going to all the big pharmaceuticals and health care industries, what we want to do is we begin to move towards balancing the budget, reducing this payment here in the red, and then we have money to invest in lowering college tuition costs, making sure health care is affordable for all of our citizens, making sure we raise the minimum wage. All of these things are going to fit into our long-term economic plan that the Democratic Party has.

We just need to control the levers of government here to make sure that happens. This is exactly how we are going to go about it.

One of the other things that we will invest in, my good friend, and I think it is important to make this point, just in the first few days when we get in, think about it, raise the minimum wage and reduce the loans, the interest on the college loans, by half.

So for the parent loans and the student loans, in the first day or two that we are here, we will cut the interest rates on those loans in half. You will save thousands of dollars over the life of your loan, about $5,000 for the average loan. We will raise the minimum wage, and that is for a single mom who works for minimum wage, who lives in poverty right now. That is unacceptable in the United States of America.

Another thing that we will invest in that this administration and the Republican-led Congress have failed to address is the issue of border security. These are facts that we are going to show you here. When you compare, because I think again the rhetoric on the other side is right where it needs to be, but the reality is something drastically different. If you look at here, Clinton, and these are all comparing President Clinton and what he was doing under his term, two terms, and what happened under President Bush and trying to compare, the average number of new Border Patrol agents added, per year, under the Clinton administration, the average was 642 Border Patrol agents per year.

Under the Bush administration, 411 per year. It is one thing to say you are for protecting this country from illegal immigration, and it is another thing to do it. Under President Clinton, we were able do it under his leadership.

Fines for immigration enforcement, through the INS, in 1999, under President Clinton, 417; 2004, three. Three. Completed immigration fraud cases, 1995, under President Clinton, 6,455; in 2003, 1,389, 78 percent fewer. Democrats understand how to administer government and what needs to be done. Under the leadership of President Clinton, we were able to achieve success.

I wish we could keep going in the right direction.

□ 1830

But, unfortunately, under the Republican Congress, under the Republican House and Senate, under President Bush, this Congress has consistently taken the country in the wrong direction, and I think it is frustrating for a lot of people because I think the rhetoric is there.

The numbers for 2004 have come in, and a lot of our friends on the other side want to tell us how great the economy is doing. I invite all to come back to my district where we have thousands of Delphi workers and thousands of General Motors workers and steelworkers and people who are not doing so well, and an increase in the minimum wage would affect them.

But the numbers have come in from 2004; and in 2004, the top 1 percent, their real income grew by 17 percent for the top 1 percent. Same people that get the corporate welfare, same people that get the tax cut, real income grew by 17 percent. The bottom 99 grew by 1½ percent.

Is there economic growth? Yeah. The problem is it is not affecting everybody. The problem is it is just 1 or 2 percent of the people. Even upper-income people, upper-middle-class people did not benefit from real wage growth like they should have.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is so lopsided and so one-sided. Of course, Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress would come to the floor and say, oh, the economy is doing great, what are you talking about? I do not know what these folks are whining about that are making $5.15 an hour; I do not know what their problem is. Why are they talking about an increase in the minimum wage? Matter of fact, what is the minimum wage?

Well, let me just say this, they would not know because the Republican majority has not raised the minimum wage since 1997. Zero since 1997. The cost of whole milk has gone up 24 percent. Bread has gone up 25 percent. A 4-year public college education has gone up 77 percent. Health care costs have gone up 97 percent, and of course, regular gas, and this is just regular gas, has gone up 136 percent.

We have Republican leaders that are here saying in so many words not over my dead body am I going to raise the minimum wage. Of course, what are you talking about? The economy is doing great. If you let the Republican majority tell you that, you know what? In 1998 Members of Congress received $3,100 in a raise. In 1998, no minimum wage increase. In 2000, $4,600 raise for Members of Congress; in 2000, minimum-wage workers, zero. 2001, $3,800 increase, just got one the year before, Members of Congress; 2001, zero for minimum-wage workers. 2002, $4,900 increase, we just had an increase, but you know this is not good enough. $4,900 increase; 2002, of course, zero. 2003, Members of Congress, $4,700, who believe it is kind of good when you can press the button and give yourself a raise, but then you turn around, no increase for minimum-wage workers. They need to suck it up.

We are okay. $3,400 increase, thanks to the Republican majority; 2004 minimum wage, no increase, thanks to the Republican majority. Members of Congress, $4,000, hey, it is a wonderful thing; minimum-wage workers wish they can go to work and say, hey, guess what I want, a $4,000, I know you just gave me one last year, I want another one this year; 2005, zero for minimum-wage workers. 2006, $3,100 proposed for Members of Congress, and if it is like previous years, this is what it will be; 2006, zero as we stand here today.

So as people start talking about, well, you know, the economy is doing great on the Republican side. Oh, do you not know this is great. The indicators of the indicators say it is going to be a great year for Members of Congress and for the top 1½ percent or 1 percent of those individuals that are millionaires. For these big-time oil executives that are with the $398 million retirement package, it is going to be great for them.

It is going to be great for the oil industry after they had that meeting over in the White House complex thanks to the rubber-stamp Congress. They made the energy policy there, rubber-stamp Congress approved it, and look at these profits for big oil companies: $34 billion profits in 2002; 2003, $59 billion; in 2004, $84 billion; and in 2005, $113 billion.

Now, I am not on the floor as a Democratic Member of Congress complaining about things not going my way. Well, guess what. It is not about my way. It is about the American way, and no one tells you, no one says when you pull up to the gas pump, hey, you over there, let me see your party affiliation. Are you a Democrat or a Republican or Independent or do you vote at all? No, they tell you that gas is $3.24.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, these oil companies are making hand over fist in record profits since the oil industry has even been established, ever. I mean, since it has been around.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Since there has been oil.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Since there has been oil, since the dinosaurs went down and made oil. Okay, this is just where it is.

These guys, they are making more money than ever before, but guess what, the American people are paying for it, and the rubber-stamp Congress, on top of them making profits, are giving the taxpayers' money away and telling the minimum-wage workers to suck it up.

You want a minimum wage? We have got leaders in Republican conference that are saying minimum wage, please. But meanwhile, back at the ranch, they have been getting a raise. We have all been getting a raise, year after year after year after year after year after year.

Minimum-wage workers punch in and punch out every day. We ask individuals to go to work. They have gone to work. They are trying to raise their families. No one is coming to them and saying, hey, we are going to give you a $3,100 raise, we are going to give you a $4,700 raise, we are going to give you a $4,100 raise, we are going to give you a $3,900 raise, we are going to give you a $3,100 raise, and we are going to give you a $3,600 raise, and next year you are going to get another raise and the year after that you are going to get another raise. These folks are making $5.15 an hour and we are saying suck it up.

Well, on this side of the aisle, we have said we are not going to vote for an increase in the Members of Congress pay until the American people get a raise; and in our new direction for America, Mr. Speaker, we are calling for $7.25 an hour. If we have the opportunity, this will not be a Special Order floor speech talking about what we are going to do, like this is some prize fight and someone says once the fight happens, I am going to win.

We are making it a promise that one of the first actions that we take if we are in the majority when it comes after the November elections, and we get here in January, the minimum wage as it relates to this House will be raised to $7.25 to help everyday American workers and not just help ourselves.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the bottom line with the minimum wage is that the increase in the minimum wage is good for the economy. In 1997, when it was raised, there were 11 million new jobs that were created after the increase in the minimum wage, 11 million new jobs. States that have a higher minimum wage than the Federal minimum wage have an increase in business start-ups, an increase in sales, retail sales, because it is a different philosophy. It puts the money in the pockets of the consumers and allows them to go out and spend the money, and that stimulates the economy.

We have implemented the neoconservative agenda, and it has not benefited 99 percent of the American people, whether it is foreign policy, the war in Iran, the disengagement in the Middle East, what is going on all over the world or on the domestic side, with Katrina and the prescription drug bill and the stagnant wages and the increase in energy costs, all of these things.

We have now witnessed what it looks like when the neoconservative agenda is implemented, and just look around. If you want to know what happens, just look around. You see it.

What we are trying to say is an increase in the minimum wage, cutting student loans in half, implementing the 9/11 recommendations, shoring up our border security, these are things that we are going to do; and we have a long history in our party of doing it, and we will continue to do it when we take over.

But it is important to recognize that the statistics are there regarding the

minimum wage. We could sit here and make moral arguments all night long because it is, it is the morally right thing to do; but at the same time it is good for the economy and it is good for people all over the country, and I think the more we recognize that, the better off we are going to be.

I want to make one more point. When you talk about this 7 million people who make minimum wage and the underclass and the people all over our country who are living in poverty, and the minimum wage would keep you in poverty if you work 40 hours a week and you are a working mom, we only have 300 million people in this country. We are competing with billions of people around the world, 1.3 billion in China, 1 billion people in India. We only have 300 million.

So we have got to go to great lengths to make sure that all 300 million that are physically and mentally and emotionally capable so they can be on the field playing for us.

This is what an increase in the minimum wage does. That is what cutting interest rates on student loans in half, that is what that does. That is when you look at the Democratic Party's Innovation Agenda, creating incentives for venture capital and research and all of these things that we are doing, broadband access for all Americans in the next 5 years, when you look at what we want to do with alternative energy sources, my God, we cannot just reject science outright.

Let us turn it up. You know, let us get America focused on an alternative energy plan, and we can do that and that is doable; but we need the leadership here in Congress and the resources. Instead of going to the top 1 percent to give them a tax cut, we should be focusing on what is the next generation of alternative energy going to be.

Let us implement the recommendations from the 9/11 Commission. Let us secure our ports. We can do all these things; and at the same time as we are doing this, we have to talk about what Mr. TANNER came down here a couple of weeks ago to talk about with us, DENNIS CARDOZA from California, his piece of legislation, that says we are going to audit, we are going to audit the Federal Government, and we are going to make sure that there is no fat, no waste, no abuse, no misspent funds, no misappropriated funds, no misallocated funds, and frankly, like in Iraq, there are funds missing, $9 billion. Nobody knows where it is.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. In Iraq missing? We are missing money here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I know.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There are agencies, Mr. Speaker, in the millions, oh, we do not know what happened to $24 million. They just write it off like it is nothing. I mean, you do not even have to go as far as Iraq. Right here in Washington, D.C., because the rubber-stamp Congress will not call these individuals in. People are in committee talking about, I do not know where it went; it came to us.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You know what Mr. TANNER's bill says, it is our bill, it says that if you are the Secretary of the Department and you cannot pass these audits, then after a couple of years, you have got to come back before the United States Senate and you have got to get confirmed again because you are not doing your job.

We are trying to run a government that is based, it looks like it is 1950, but society has moved forward. Society has decentralized, and the Republican Congress, they are like dinosaurs that just do not recognize the changes that have come in the world and have not done the due diligence necessary to reform government.

I mean, you can say, well, here is the Democrats making this up again. We do not have to make anything up. Look how FEMA worked with Katrina. Look at how after the military portion of the war in Iraq, look at how we have done after that, not only losing money but not achieving the objective, not really having an objective, to having a big problem there, too.

□ 1845

As Newt Gingrich said last week on Meet the Press, with all that is going on around the world, our bureaucracies do not have the capabilities of handling all these situations. State Department, Pentagon, Department of Defense, all of these. Come on. We need to reform this government and we don't have time to wait.

Because if there is going to be a terrorist attack in the United States of America, it is not going to be like Katrina where we have 5 days where we could watch it on the Weather Channel and know it is coming. This government needs reformed and it needs reformed immediately and that means getting to the bottom of things. That means getting all the facts necessary. That means calling hearings.

What that also means, Mr. MEEK, is that some people are going to get embarrassed. Maybe people just need to come before Congress and say, ''Mr. MEEK, under this system, no one could do this job.'' Maybe that is the case. I will give you the benefit of the doubt. You appointed equestrian attorneys and all this other stuff to key positions. Yes, there has been a lot of cronyism here, let's not make any mistake about it. And it cost lives and money during Katrina, bottom line. But at the same time, maybe there are good people, hardworking Americans, that want to serve their government that are trapped in a bureaucracy that was designed in the 1930s or 1940s or 1950s and has stayed there and they can't work within this bureaucracy.

Have the decency and the guts to try to reform it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Somebody needs to be embarrassed? Somebody needs to be fired.

Embarrassed? Oh, please. They are just following the lead of the Republican majority. If I was an agency department head or secretary or someone confirmed by the Senate, I mean, when I look at my chart here, when I look at $1.05 trillion in borrowing from foreign nations, dethroning 42 Presidents, 224 years of history where they only borrowed $1.01 trillion, how in the world could I rein in a department head where I have endorsed this, in the trillions of dollars, $1.05 trillion in 4 years alone. It is almost like me calling my children into the room and to say: You're doing the wrong thing. You're eating at 11 o'clock at night. You're going to get heavy. You're going to get sick.

They say: Well, Dad, look at you. You have eight gallons of ice cream sitting right in front of you. How can you talk to me about not eating at 11 o'clock at night and eating too much sugar?

How in the world can the Republican Congress go to these department heads who can't find $24 million that are missing in their agency and they have borrowed, here in this Congress, $1.05 trillion, record breaking, from foreign nations.

I am not going to even spend time taking the stuff off because I wish I had time to deal with it but I don't. The bottom line is these are the countries that own a part of the American apple pie because of the mismanagement of the Republican majority. That is the bottom line. You see the countries. I don't need to call them out. They are buying our debt. If you came to me and said, my good friend, can I borrow $50 from you? I consider us good friends, but if I loaned you $50, our relationship is now changed. Even if you pay me back, which I think you will, within 5 or 6 days, our relationship has changed because you have asked to borrow some of the money that I work hard for, that I can spend on issues dealing with my family.

These countries have bought our debt. The relationship has changed, thanks to the Republican majority and the White House. $1.01 trillion, 224 years, Mr. Speaker, of the country's history, 4 years under the Bush administration and the rubber-stamp Congress. You dethrone 224 years of history, of borrowing from foreign nations. We borrow a record number and these are the nations: Japan, China, the U.K., the Caribbean, Taiwan, OPEC nations. Who are the OPEC nations? Let's just go down the list because there are so many but they own $67.8 billion of our debt: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE. I can go on. Ecuador. I can go on and on and on. Meanwhile, folks come to the floor and get all swollen and saying, we need to watch these foreigners and what they're doing and how they're doing it.

The bottom line is the foreigners have bought our debt, thanks to you. It is upsetting. It is upsetting to the point that we have veterans that are out there allowing us to salute one

flag, laid their life down, watched their friends die, and we are sitting here giving tax cuts to billionaires and misappropriating dollars and not providing the oversight. So how in the world a Member of Congress can sit up here, especially on the majority side and talk about reining someone in because they have misappropriated dollars and they don't know where they are. This rubber-stamp Republican majority has given the White House everything they want. And what do we have to show for it?

Let's look at the Middle East. Let's look at something as far as the eye can see that folks start talking about an exit strategy. How in the world can you even come up with a strategy when you have done it alone and have given the White House everything they wanted? The Congress, well-documented, misled. You got the White House saying, well, you know, we were misled, too. The President has said, well, as it relates to trying to take the training wheels off the Iraqi government, saying that they have to provide their own security, that's for a future President to deal with. He has already punted and said, That's for a future President to deal with.

Congress, of course, rubber-stamp Republican Congress, yes, sir, Benny Hill salute, yes, sir. Whatever you want. So shall it be written, so shall it be done, Mr. President.

That is not the case in a democracy. Bill Clinton did not celebrate that relationship. Even Bush I did not celebrate that relationship. It goes to show you when democracy breaks down and governance breaks down and you have this rubber-stamp, rally-rally-rally Congress, that we're going to support you no matter how bad your policies are, we're going to rubber-stamp everything that you do, how in the world can they rein someone in and have oversight and say, oh, so you don't know where $24 million that we've given you of the taxpayers' dollars are and how they were spent? Or wasted? You can't answer that? You're fired.

The bottom line is we are going to subpoena you and the rest of the folks that work in that agency until we find out where the $24 million has gone. The real issue is this. The American people, Democrat, Republican, Independent, someone that is not voting now and is now taking interest in what is happening up here in Washington, D.C. has to have a problem of what's going on.

I am just going to say that the facts are what they are. Some nights I come to the floor, I say, it's not even fair. It's just too much stuff. It's too much to talk about. It's too much to even shed light on. We come to the floor and we share the same information many times because it is so historical. It is historical in a way to where that never, never before in the history of this country has it ever been this way.

I know it took me 10 minutes to answer your question that you put out there, but I had to put it out there.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate you cutting your answer short.

I agree with you wholeheartedly. If we don't recognize and understand from A to Z what needs to be done in reforming the Government to make sure that we can respond to the needs of our constituents, we are in the service industry down here. We administer programs and we regulate commerce and we take care of foreign policy and we build a military, raise a military, raise an army. We have that obligation. I commend you for your passion and your support and your ideas which do not go unnoticed. But it is so important for us to recognize when we get down here, the few decisions that we will make immediately will have an immediate impact on the lives of every American. By auditing the Government and by going back to make sure that we can figure out how Government needs to look and run and be administered and executed in the 21st century based on an economy that is based on knowledge and information and science, not necessarily industry and huge steel companies and huge auto companies and big bureaucracies were needed to combat and administer and lift people up. I think to a certain extent we need to maintain those principles, but at the same time Government needs to change.

There are so many programs that have really been frustrating, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen funding reined in on, the programs that will ultimately lead to economic development: the manufacturing extension program, the Small Business Administration 7(a) loan program. These are the kind of things that local economic development folks can use. We need to focus on how we export goods out of this country. We have been playing a lot of defense and I think the resentment that you feel in places like Ohio and Indiana and Pennsylvania and the old industrial Midwest is not that there is change, but the country has the wherewithal to pass free trade agreements and begin to compete in a global economy; but at the same time, we haven't done anything at home to make sure that we have adequate skilled workers that will be able to be employed or create wealth in this new society and which we can export and create wealth with business incubators, with job retraining.

Why is it so difficult for us to get some of these workers from the auto industry or the steel industry or wherever it may be into the health care industry? We have a nursing shortage on one hand. We have job reductions in many other industries. What is the problem? We need 3 million health care workers in the next decade or so. We need a million new nurses in the next decade or so. Government needs to be nimble enough and flexible enough where we could make sure that we address these issues. Not because we want to do it for the sake of the Government but because we want to do it because it is going to be good for the overall economy. It is going to be good. The more nurses, the more doctors, the healthier we are going to be. The more general sense we have about wellness and community health clinics and putting clinics in our schools and wellness programs and intramural programs and after-school programs, these ultimately lead to healthier, more educated, more productive citizens which means increased value, more wealth creation and ultimately a strong America so that we can deal with all of these complex problems in the world, not from a position of weakness.

I think what you showed with your map, with all the different countries and the debt that is owed and the net interest that we are paying on the debt, we are now in a position of weakness. We need help with North Korea and we go to our bank, China, and ask them for help. You can't negotiate from a position of weakness. That is what we are doing right now. So we don't get any help with North Korea. We need help with Iran and some of these other countries. Everyone who is loaning us money says, go take a hike. And we hear the utter disrespect that Vladimir Putin showed, not our President but our country, because our President is representing all of us, all 300 million, when he goes to the G–8 summit. And to have Vladimir Putin basically say, no thanks, we don't want the kind of democracy that you're trying to push in Iraq, that is disrespecting the United States of America. When you look at how people are viewing us around the world, it becomes very, very difficult to try to promote the kind of values that we all believe in and try to maintain our strength here at home.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. In closing, we really have to look at what is happening right now. I know we are doing all that we can do. We have filed legislation. We were able to stop the privatization of Social Security by having over 500 town hall meetings throughout the country. The President burned all kinds of Federal jet fuel flying around the country trying to convince people that they need to privatize their Social Security. That was very, very unfortunate. Taxpayers' money was spent. Still the plan was abandoned.

We also pushed very hard to make sure that we pay as we go here on the floor. We are still fighting on that as it relates to our Federal spending. You talk about the tax and spend and whatever the case may be. I can tell you that Republicans can't look in the mirror here in the House, the majority can't look in the mirror and say that they are the example of fiscal responsibility because I think the history of this country will show and this 109th Congress, and even the Congress before that, that there has been more spending now than any other time in the history of this country, especially when you look at what happened during the Lyndon Johnson years versus the Bush

years. Because right now you are seeing with the rubber-stamp Congress and President Bush that the Lyndon Johnson administration and the Congress at that time has been dethroned as it relates to spending.

□ 1900

So I think it is very important that we look at that. I think it is also important to look at our plan, America going in a new direction, going into a new direction, making sure that they have representation here in this House. And this is for every American, not just Democrats, not just Republicans, not just Independent, not just individuals that have decided to participate in the political process, making sure that we help working families every day and the individuals that are retired and our veterans and all of the folks that we should be fighting for in a very fierce way.

I think it is important that if you folks really want to look at making sure these oil companies no longer price gouge Americans, making sure that we have affordable health care and prescription drug care, making sure that working families are able to make a livable wage, that is something that we are working very hard on.

We are going to start with the minimum wage, moving that to $7.25 from $5.15, making sure that the Congress doesn't give themselves another raise. And the Democratic leader and the Democratic whip and myself and a number of members of our caucus have said, no increase for Members of Congress until the American people get an increase.

And also, what Mr. RYAN talked about a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, cutting the student loan interest rate in half so that it can be affordable for folks to go to college to be able to make a stronger workforce for us. Also, as it relates to tax breaks for those that are paying for college.

I already hit the issue on preventing the administration and those here in Congress from privatizing Social Security. And I think it is also important for us to note that all of this is on our Web site with our energy plan, our real security plan as it relates to protecting America, and our plan on investing in the Midwest versus in the Middle East, of E85 and other alternative fuels.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I will give the Web site. In closing, I would just like to say that when you look at the history of the country, being an American really is an adventure. We have seen, from the inception of this country, that there have been tremendous challenges. But tremendous leaders and heroes abound in the country, all over, in the public sector, in the private sector, in education, in science, in medicine. We have seen and produced some of the greatest individuals in the history of the world, and being an American is an adventure.

The most frustrating part, I believe, in the last several years, and we have said this before on this floor, is that after 9/11, with all of the political capital that the President had, with the whole country watching him, the best, greatest most demanding challenge he could come up with was for the American people to go out and go shopping. You know, that, I think, illustrates the kind of leadership we do not need in all of these changing times.

And so our leadership that we provide from Article I, section 1 of the United States Constitution, which creates this House of Representatives, I am excited about the possibilities, come January, that we will have, when we are running this government, at least from the House side and hopefully from the Senate side too.

But like you said, we want to use all of the talents, all the creativity, all of the ability and intellect that this country can muster to make sure we are pushing it forward. As you said, with alternative energies and investments in education and getting creative with how we are going to create wealth in the 21st century, through business incubators and some of these small business programs that we have that can go and help and retool small businesses that don't have the wherewithal to pay $1 million for consultants to come in.

We have a public program that allows businesses to retool themselves for 80 or $90,000. And I have had people in my office who have experienced this program. It led to tremendous job growth here in the United States.

So there are things that we can do. And I think it is an exciting time for all of us. And I very much look forward to us doing this in January. www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, it was a pleasure being on the floor with you this evening. As you know, we want to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have this time.

We also would say that it was a pleasure addressing the House

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, JULY 21, 2006, TO FILE REPORT ON H.R. 2965, FEDERAL PRISON INDUSTRIES COMPETITION IN CONTRACTING ACT OF 2005

Mr. KING of Iowa (during Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be permitted to file a committee report to accompany the bill, H.R. 2965, no later than midnight on July 21, 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2864. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the 5-minute Special Order for the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is vacated.

There was no objection.

HONORING OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHENRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here on the House floor tonight to report to my colleagues and those who may be watching what I learned over the last long weekend. I was privileged to go with Chairman PETE HOEKSTRA of the House Intelligence Committee to Iraq. It was my first trip to Iraq. It was a very eye-opening experience, Mr. Speaker and Members, one that I won't soon forget.

Before I get started talking about that trip and some of the lessons that I learned while we were there, I would like to start with a quote. And I will come back to this later. The quote is: ''Do not try to do too much with your own hands. It is their war, and you are here to help them win it, not win it for them.'' I am going to come back to that quote later, Mr. Speaker, because I think it says so much about some of the things that we learned while we were in Iraq. Most importantly, I will come back and tell you who it was that originally said that.

The first thing I want to say tonight, though, is an enormous thank you and congratulations to the brave Americans who serve the United States in uniform.

When you get off the plane in Baghdad, you realize what they have to put up with, particularly during the summer. When the door opens on that plane, it is like opening the door of an oven. And there to greet you are bright young Americans, and they are in full uniform, helmets, heavy flak jackets. And I don't know what the temperature was, but it was the hottest I have ever experienced in my life. And those are the conditions under which our brave Americans do their business every day. And it is not just that they do it for 8 hours a day with long lunches and coffee breaks. The folks over there are working 12 hours a day and, in many cases, 7 days a week. And I don't think there is anything that we could say here in this Congress which would ever adequately express the

thanks that we have for the sacrifices that they make for serving this country.

I should also say a very special thank you to their families. The ones that I met and the ones that I was able to talk to probably had more to say about their families and wanted to make sure that they knew that they were okay and that they were doing their jobs and that they missed home. But more importantly, many of them said that they really felt that they were doing something that was important there.

So I want to, first of all, just recognize the professionalism that we saw every step of the way. When we left Kuwait, we were flying on a C–130, and I was lucky enough to get the long straw, so I got to sit up in the cockpit. And the young people who were flying that plane, and I almost called them kids, because I don't think even the pilot was 30 years old, but they were among the most professional pilots and crew that I have ever had the privilege to fly with.

As we got closer to Baghdad, all of a sudden this young pilot and all the crew became very animated and they were paying a lot of attention to what was happening on the ground. And I quickly figured out what they were doing. They were looking for any puffs of smoke or anything that might be fired at the C–130 we were flying in.

Finally, as we got closer to Baghdad, the pilot literally turned that big, fat C–130 into a dive bomber. And they make a special approach when they landed at the Baghdad airport. And in spite of that almost dive-bomb approach, he made an incredibly smooth and soft landing. And I want to thank him for that.

But as I say, we had an opportunity to meet with a number of the folks who were serving over there. I am going to talk just a little bit tonight about one of those units, a National Guard unit from the State of North Dakota.

What they do every day, Mr. Speaker, Members, is they go out on the roads, mostly at night, and they look for these IEDs, these improvised explosive devices. And they told us that since they have been there, and they have been there 10 months, they have found 562 of those devices that they were ultimately able to have disposed of so that they caused no damage to people or to property along the roads of Iraq.

Forty-two of those explosives devices, however, went off while they were trying to work with them. Forty-two. In fact, I talked to one young man, I believe his name was Lynch, from North Dakota, and he had been involved in four incidents where the IED went off. And I really can't say enough about the people who do that kind of thing every day.

As I say, there is no way that we in Congress, there are no words that we could offer here in Congress which could repay the debt of gratitude that I think we and the people of Iraq have to the brave Americans like that unit from North Dakota.

We also had a chance to visit a field hospital there, and it was kind of ironic because one of the people that we met there was someone that I already knew. He was one of the top surgeons at the Mayo Clinic, and I am privileged to represent Rochester, Minnesota and the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Mike Yaszemski. And Dr. Yaszemski was there and had been in Iraq since about the Fourth of July, and he and some of the other surgeons told me that they had been up since 2:00 that morning, performing surgery on five folks who were involved with an IED that night.

And later we got to go in and visit in the hospital there with some of the soldiers who had been treated. And one of them was more than happy to tell his entire story. And while they were pinning the Purple Heart on the sheet on his bed, he told his entire story and what it was like to go through one of these IED explosions. Perhaps the most moving moment, though, was, as he was telling his story, how the Humvee that he had been in had essentially been blown about 150 feet off the ground, and I can't remember whether it was he came down upside down or the Humvee came down on its side, but the vehicle was on fire, and one of his buddies, a private, said get out. You have got to get out. You have got to get out. And he said, well, I am paralyzed from the waist down. And he couldn't get out of the Humvee himself.

Now, this was a fairly large guy. I would guess he probably weighed 230 pounds. And he said that the private was a pretty small little guy. And here this private, when he realized that his buddy was caught in the Humvee and it was on fire and he hollered out that he was paralyzed from the waist down, he couldn't get out, this young private got in there and got him out. I don't know exactly how he pulled him out, but it was an amazing story. And this young individual wanted to make sure that before they loaded him on to one of the big transport planes, the C–17 to fly him to the hospital in Germany at Landstuhl, he wanted to make sure that he got a chance to say thank you to that private, because he said he saved his life.

And as he told his story, we were standing around, and I know what I was thinking. I was thinking, gee, is he going to be paralyzed for the rest of his life?

Well, thanks to the good work of surgeons like Dr. Mike Yaszemski, I am happy to report that that soldier is going to be able, as he laid there, he smiled and he says, ''I can wiggle my toes.'' And what a happy story it was for all of us in that room.

And we owe such a debt of gratitude to the staff, including people like Dr. Michael Yaszemski from Mayo Clinic for the magic that they do and the hard work that they do and the dedication that they have every single day.

You know, the U.S. military, I think, is unmatched in the world and perhaps in the history of the world in terms of the execution of conventional war. There is little doubt that we have no adversaries in the rest of the world who can match the firepower, the training, the technology and, most importantly, the professionalism of the Americans who serve us in uniform. No one can really challenge the United States in a conventional war.

□ 1915

But as we toured around Iraq and went to several of the bases and, more importantly, as we spent time in Baghdad, it became obvious to me that the security situation was not what I had expected. As a matter of fact, we had to fly in helicopters, Black Hawk helicopters, to fly from the airport into the Green Zone. And it had been my understanding that one time people who were coming to visit, like myself and the rest of our delegation, could actually drive into the Green Zone. But somebody told us that it is now the most dangerous highway in the world. And somehow after 3 years and over $332 billion, I guess I was somewhat surprised that the security situation in Baghdad was as bad as it is. And, again, I kept coming back to this notion that, indeed, our military is unmatched and unchallenged, I think, in the world in terms of conventional warfare. But I think we have to be honest with ourselves that our military is not well suited to be an occupation force, and probably even less suited to be involved in the nation-building business. And I think that is something that I felt and I believe other members of our delegation felt, that we are really asking our military to do some things which they are not particularly well suited to do.

And I just wanted to offer some of those observations because as we were returning from Iraq, and it is a long flight, one of my colleagues who was on the trip with us had a copy of an article, and I am going to submit it for the RECORD if it is possible, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to talk a little bit about the article, and I will enter this into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at the end of my remarks.

What it is is a column that was written by former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, who served as Secretary of Defense from 1969 to 1973. He was also a counselor to the President for domestic affairs in the Nixon White House. And the article that I am talking about appeared in Foreign Affairs back in the November/December of 2005 edition. The title of the article is ''Iraq: The Learning Lessons of Vietnam.''

And in many respects, Melvin Laird is in a very unique position to talk about both the history of that but, more importantly, what we should learn from those years and how we could apply them to the situation the the United States finds itself in today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read from the article because I think it says

a lot in a few sentences right here that really illustrate what I think is a conclusion and the takeaway that I had from this particular visit to Iraq.

He says: Another great tragedy of Vietnam was the Americanization of the war. This threatens to be the tragedy of Iraq also. The war needed to be turned back to the people who cared about it, the Vietnamese. They needed U.S. money and training but not more American blood. I called our program Vietnamization, and in spite of the naysayers, I have not ceased to believe that it worked.''

And he goes on to say in another paragraph: ''We need to put our resources and unwavering public support behind a program of Iraqization so that we can get out of Iraq and leave the Iraqis in a position to protect themselves. The Iraq War should have been focused on Iraqization even before the first shot was fired.''

Mr. Speaker, I read this column on the way home, and I want to tell about where we went after we left that hospital, because we flew up and we were only the second congressional delegation since 1991 to actually go up and visit Kurdistan. And we landed there at their airport, and I was surprised. I was shocked because I, frankly, expected to be greeted by bearded warriors with AK–47s over their shoulders, and what we were greeted by were businessmen wearing business suits who were very friendly, very hospitable, and the first thing you see when you get off the plane are new buildings going up, high-rise buildings around the airport there.

And as we drove into town, and I want to emphasize as we drove into town with minimum security, I asked about those buildings. They said, These are new condominiums going up. They are luxury condominiums. They will sell for anywhere from $250,000 to $400,000. This is in Irbil, Iraq. This is in the Kurdish zone.

And we went into town, and we got to meet with some of the political leaders including their Parliament. It was interesting to learn that the Parliament that they have there in the Kurdish area is very representative. Over 16 percent of the members of the Kurdish Parliament are women. We even met a Christian who is a member of the Kurdish Parliament. It is very open and very pragmatic. And we met with the Prime Minister. And he is coming to Washington here in the next month or so. I hope all Members will get a chance to meet him. In fact, I think he is coming in September. He is one of the most charismatic, articulate leaders that I ever met. He was very candid with us.

First of all, he thanked us. He thanked us for all that America has done for the Kurdish people. Now, admittedly, the Kurds from a cultural standpoint are different than many of the other Iraqis, but they are Muslim. And he told us that they faced all the same problems in 1991 that the southern part of Iraq is facing today. They had factionalization. They had terrorists. But they adopted what I would describe as a zero-tolerance policy. In fact, they described one particular incident where someone had committed an act of terrorism and then fled to Baghdad. They went after them, and they brought them to justice.

You see, they have the advantage that they speak the language, they understand the culture, but, most importantly, they know who the bad guys are. And as I sort of distilled this story, and I was surprised by the wealth of the Kurdish region, one of our colleagues said, Well, but you have oil.

And the Prime Minister smiled, and he said, The whole country has oil. He said, The difference is we have decided to work together to develop our resources so that we can have an economic future of prosperity for all of our people, whether they happen to be Christians or whether they happen to be Shiia or whether they happen to be Sunnis, whatever. And the only thing they have said is that they will not tolerate terrorism in their territories.

And there are two things that they demand from the national government: One is they will not tolerate a religious state. Even though they are Muslims, they tolerate other religions, and it makes an enormous difference in the way people are living and working together in the northern portion of Iraq.

The second thing that they said they demanded is an equitable distribution of oil royalties. And when you see what they have accomplished up there, you can understand why now that they have done all the work, they do not want to share all of their revenues with the people of the rest of Iraq.

But, most importantly, we asked him, Don't the Kurds really want to be independent?

And again he smiled and he said, Well, if you polled my constituents, I suspect that almost universally they would be in favor of independence. But, he said, that is not practical. In fact, he said, we Kurds have decided that we have our best opportunity to work with the rest of the people of Iraq and be part of a strong and united and economically prosperous Iraq.

We all sat there and listened to this, and we met with the members of the Parliament. They threw an enormous feast for us of some of the finest food I have ever had in my life. And as we sat and listened and visited and learned from them, I said to myself, and it is one of my favorite expressions, I said, Success leaves clues, and if you really want to know what Iraq can look like, you would have to visit the Kurds.

And it is unfortunate that too many of our colleagues have not had the chance or taken the chance when they visited Iraq to go up and visit the Kurds. But it is an enormous success story, and I think it is the model that if we can somehow imprint on the rest of the country and if the new Prime Minister, Mr. Maliki, will take that as the model, adopt it for the rest of Iraq, then I think that Iraq can have a very bright future.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that the leader of our delegation, PETE HOEKSTRA, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, was good enough to invite me along and, more importantly, get me into some of the most interesting meetings I have ever been at. So I would like to yield to the leader of our congressional delegation, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank my colleague for yielding. And maybe we can have a little bit of a dialogue about the trip that we had.

It is kind of interesting. It was your first opportunity to be in country. It was my eighth trip into the theater, and I probably spent close to 20 days on the ground now in Iraq. And you are flying in from Kuwait, and I think you and I both had an opportunity to be up in the cockpit with the pilots. And I think the pilot, he had been on assignment a number of times, and I believe this might have been his eighth tour. It was something like that. So he spent a good part of the last 3 years flying C–130s back and forth between Kuwait, Baghdad, around the theater inside Baghdad to Jordan, probably to UAE and various places.

But what really struck me was the first two soldiers that I met, the conviction and the enthusiasm that they still felt for the mission. I mean, each time I go, the litmus test to me is kind of what are our soldiers saying? This C–130 pilot, he is flying our troops back and forth, and he says, We are here. I keep wanting to come back. We need to win this mission. We need to stay until it is done, and we are doing the right thing and we are making progress.

And I think for a couple of reasons, these folks interact with the pilot maybe not as much, but they hear the stories of our troops on the ground as to the interaction that they are having with the Iraqi people and the appreciation from the Iraqi people. And I hope this is one of the things that Prime Minister Maliki talks about next week, about the genuine appreciation of the Iraqi people for the progress and the support that they have received. They see that appreciation.

The other thing that I think they see is they see the horror of the other side. These are terrorists who attack civilians. Our troops understand their viciousness, and they understand the nature of these people, that they are not just attacking in Iraq, but I mean there is all this talk now about what is going on in Lebanon. 1983 is when our barracks were blown up, 23 years ago, Hezbollah. Even before that, terrorist groups have been attacking U.S. interests, Western interests around the globe. And I think our troops see the need to confront this and to defeat it and that they genuinely believe that if we step away and do not confront it, it will move back to the homeland.

We go on the ground to Baghdad, get met at the airport by someone who interned in my office about a couple of years ago, interned in my office, went to Hope College in my district, got to be a good friend with a number of the people in the church that we go to, so he went to our church. He is now embedded not in the international zone where you and I were, he is embedded with Iraqi troops that have been trained. So there are like eight to ten U.S. troops with a large group of Iraqi troops, and he says, Man, am I glad I am here. He hadn't been there long, but he said, You know, this is where I wanted to be. This is where I want to be right now. I am working with Iraqi troops. I have been to their homes. I have been to their families. We need to do this, and we need to see the mission through.

And like I said, he had just been there a couple of months. And like I said, this is a kid that I know. If he did not feel that way, he would have told me. But he had just gotten there, and they also see the sacrifices that the Iraqi people are making.

□ 1930

There have been a lot more Iraqi troops, police and citizens that have been killed over the last number of months than U.S. troops. They are willing to go to the front lines. They are willing to pay the price and make the difference.

You and I both saw, there is lots of work to be done. It is not a pretty picture on certain occasions. The day we were there, the folks went in and got the chairman of the National Olympic Committee.

Maybe you have talked a little bit about some of the other things we observed. We can talk about the training of the troops, the need to secure Baghdad. I heard you talk about Kurdistan. But there is lots of work to do. It is two steps forward, one step back. But it is clearly a war against radical Islam that is moving forward, that needs to be completed.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I was talking about the Kurds, and I think every part of the trip, in my opinion, was a highlight. I hate to say one was more important than the other.

But what I had said before you came in, Congressman HOEKSTRA, was that I was so impressed with the Kurds and what they have done in taking responsibility for their own area, of having essentially a zero tolerance policy. I said that I think that may be the example that Maliki can use for the rest of the country. You mentioned, and this is what I think is the good story.

The bad story, from my view, is that Baghdad is far less secure than I thought it was. Maybe that is my fault. Maybe I had a different impression. Maybe I had been led to believe. I am not sure, and I am not really in the blame game.

But clearly Baghdad is still a very dangerous place. In fact, I think the phrase that some of them used is the road from the airport to the international zone is the most dangerous highway in the world. Maybe that is an exaggeration. But those are Americans who are serving there that used that term.

My takeaway is probably somewhat different than yours, but my conclusion and my takeaway is we need to press and continue to press for the Iraqis and exactly what you are talking about, where we have some of our Special Forces embedded and working with and training Iraqis. We trained, I think the number is 262,000 Iraqis so far. We need to really push them to step up, as they have in the northern parts of the country, to take responsibility for policing their own streets.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If the gentleman will yield, that is a conclusion that we probably reached on a bipartisan basis, that it is absolutely essential to as rapidly as possible train up the Iraqis and transfer sections of the country to Iraqi troops with U.S. advisers. They know the neighborhood, they know the culture, and I think they have the desire and conviction to win. We need to provide them with the training and the resources, but then get them at the front lines so that the Iraqi people in the communities see them. This is their opportunity to get the country back.

I think the other thing you said, it was my first time to Kurdistan. There was never a need to go there before. Now you can see what happens in a period of 14 years. Remember, what was the number, 182,000 Kurds had been killed by Saddam. Iran was active in creating mischief. There was an ethnic cleansing going on in the southern part of Kurdistan.

But over a period of 14 years, they have got political stability. The two major parties have come together to form a unity government, the economy is doing well and the security situation is good.

So if the rest of the country can see Kurdistan as a model and embrace the kinds of reforms, I think that is the other thing that happened in Kurdistan. They are doing the things that are attracting foreign investment and foreign confidence in what they are doing. Because you cannot rebuild Iraq with just U.S. money. You need to get the private sector coming in, and Kurdistan is doing that in the laws they are shaping to encourage and welcome foreign investment into their area. You do it in the south and the rest of the country, you have got oil, you have got agriculture, you have some manufacturing, but you have got to put in place the right legal framework.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think you said it exactly right. When I left, there was progress. I was looking for progress. I think it is a three-legged stool. I think you have to have military or security progress.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. That is all about securing Baghdad right now.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Exactly. That is where I really was disappointed. I thought Baghdad would be much more secure than what we saw or learned about it. But you have to have military security progress, and you have to have economic progress, and you have to have political progress.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The political meetings we had, it was very interesting meeting with the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Interior. The difference this time is you are meeting with people who know they are going to be in the job for 4 years. Every time I have gone before, you have always been kind of meeting with an appointed or an interim minister. Now you are meeting with somebody that has been selected, and they know they are going to be a part of this new government, which gives you a little bit more stability. The parliamentarians, obviously, representative government is a new phenomena for them and they have a little bit of work to understand exactly how that works.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Let me say, and I talked to the speaker today and I know you are working on this as well, one of the things we would like to do is invite at least a dozen of them to the United States. We may smile about our meetings with the parliamentarians, and they all had own political points of view and so forth, but, first and foremost, every Member of Congress, and I think Americans need to understand, if you are a member of the Iraq parliament, you are a hero. You are someone who has enormous courage.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. A couple of things. You are a hero, and you are a target.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Exactly. And not only are you a potential target, your family is a potential target. Most of us at one time in our political lives have had some goofball who has issued some kind of a death threat against us. Usually we don't even take it all that seriously. Fortunately, the FBI takes it very seriously, and I appreciate what they do for us every day. But in Iraq, it is a different ball game.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I would just like to reinforce the point that you made about the stories that we heard, where the people that are involved in the government, the strategy now for the terrorist groups, the insurgents, the militias, is to go after their family. You are now talking about their parents, their wife, their kids.

So it is no longer someone saying, you know, I am going to participate in this government because I think that it is the right thing to do and I know it is a risk to me. They are taking a much bigger risk. These folks have to have this dialogue with their family, saying if I participate in this, we are all at risk.

So, these are folks that are committed. The parliamentarians, when we met with them, they leave in the middle of the afternoon, because they don't live in the International Zone. They go back into the rest of the country. You

can protect them, you can protect their immediate family, but when you go out and get their brothers and sisters and parents and all that, these are people who are committed to success and there is no other way to look at it. There is no personal enrichment here.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. No. I was very impressed with the character of the parliamentarians. Hopefully, with the help of our Speaker, we can get some of them over here so that more Members of Congress can actually get a chance to visit with them, to learn from them, to talk to them and perhaps to ask them some questions.

What I was talking about earlier as well is from an article that I think we both read on the plane on the way home that was written by Melvin Laird. If anyone would like a copy, they can just send me an e-mail at Gil@mail.house.gov. We will send you a copy of this article.

I think from my perspective it actually put into perspective a lot of the things we saw on our visit and why it is so important as soon as we can and as much as we can, we need to turn more of the authority, the responsibility for managing the affairs of the Iraqi people, back to the Iraqis themselves.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It is much like what we talk about for some of our domestic policies. The longer we are there propping them up, the more we have the potential of creating a situation of dependency, where they are looking to the U.S. Government to fix their political problems, to fix their security problems and to fix their economic problems.

I think we were very clear when we met with their parliamentarians and saying we are committed to stay with you and to provide you with the opportunity to fix your political problems, to fix your economic problems and your security issues. We cannot do that, because this is your country.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. That is exactly what Melvin Laird said about Vietnam. That is why it was important to turn Vietnam, as soon as possible, back to the Vietnamese people. He said the greatest mistake was the Americanization of the Vietnam War.

I think that is something we have to be very aware of when we look at where we are today.

What I said also, Congressman HOEKSTRA, is because the Maliki government is now in place and they have a Minister of Defense, they have a Minister of the Interior, which are the two key ministries I think in terms of domestic security, now that they have those people in place, and my impression of them was they are very strong people, my impression was they understood the risks, they understood what needed to be done, and I think the next two months are going to be critical.

They have to demonstrate, in my opinion, that they really are serious, that they will deal with these militias that are out of control, they will deal with the radicals and the others who have come in from out of country.

I think it is important that our perception, and we had very good briefings, I know that sometimes it is a little like the blind men describing the elephant, but all the terrorists are not the same. Some of them are religious fanatics. Some of them are just thugs that Saddam released from prison, and they are thugs trying to create a territory and using terror and using violence, much as Al Capone in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre did, used violence in a certain way to gain a certain amount of power in a neighborhood. So it is not as simple as sometimes we would like to pigeon hole what the violence is all about. It is about a lot of things.

But, most importantly, I think the Iraqi government now has to demonstrate, as the Kurds did, that they have a zero tolerance policy. They will hunt people down and bring them to justice.

You said something else earlier about the advantage that the Iraqis have when they are doing the heavy lifting. You said they understand the culture. One thing you didn't mention, I want to add, they understand the language. That is incredibly important. That puts our forces sometimes at a huge disadvantage, because they really don't understand.

You can't really understand a culture if you weren't raised in it. So in many cases we were asking our soldiers sometimes to do some things that are very difficult. Not that they aren't very professional and they do it very well, but there is no question that Iraqis out there policing the streets can do a much better job than Americans.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Talking about soldiers that do things well, I mean, we went to Arbil, and there were two groups of people that were absolutely outstanding. The troops from North Dakota, our colleague from North Dakota, Representative POMEROY, was with us.

These guys have the responsibility of every day being on the road 18 to 20 hours and making sure that 50 miles of highway is free from IEDs. Man, these guys are good, and they have done a phenomenal job. They had a casualty a couple of weeks ago. Our sympathy goes to that unit, obviously the soldier's family in North Dakota and the whole community.

But they are well-trained, and it was inspiring to listen to their story about we came here with a job to do and here is what we have learned and here is how we are doing it. They have experienced 42 explosions, I think about 42 explosions. The vehicles they are in are designed that the compartment where the soldiers are in survives. The wheels may fall off and the engine may go away and the transmission may be gone, but the soldiers are protected.

They have experienced 42 explosions, but they have stopped, what was it, 562 they have stopped. We saw some of the devices that they have. If you wonder how good our guys are. It means as they are going down the road, they are looking ahead and they see, I wish I had taken a piece of that copper wire, just a thin little piece of copper wire, which signals to them there is a problem here, or they see a small pile of stones that wasn't there the day before. It is not that they know exactly the stones weren't there, but it is kind of like, this is strange.

□ 1945

Then they go in with their equipment, they find it, and they disarm it, 562. Then the hospital. Wow, I mean what is it? The one soldier that came in, they gave him how many units of blood? It was something like 200.

The professionalism of the docs there, you had one there from Mayo who had just come in. The professionalism of the folks there. The thing that I was really impressed with, I think one was a doc or headed up the trauma unit, was it in Cincinnati, said, ''We do things here I could not do in Cincinnati.''

He said, you know, there will be books and articles written about what we are doing here that is going to be brought back to trauma centers around America, maybe around the world, because of what we are learning and how effective we are here.

We give our troops better treatment here coming in off the battlefield than what I can give them in any major metropolitan center. I mean, my hats go off to these folks.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. They have been up performing surgery since 2 o'clock in the morning. I mentioned that Dr. Mike Yaszmenski from Mayo Clinic, he did not take the credit for it, but the story that we were all standing there when they pinned the Purple Heart on that young man. He had had several broken vertebrae, which is the reason he could not get out of his HUMVEE, and could not walk.

At the end of his little presentation, he told the whole story, he sort of smiled. He said, I can wiggle my toes. Now, Dr. Yaszmenski did not take credit for this. I am piecing this together. Because he is a spinal surgeon my sense is that he had something to do with it.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The other thing, the solder saying, before I leave, they were on space-available because he was not as seriously injured as some other soldiers, he was going on to Germany. I think he was going to leave in the next 24 hours. But said, you know, before I leave I need to make sure that I call back to my unit.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. He wanted to see that private that pulled him out.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. You know, it is inspiring to see those folks and also knowing that, you know, whether it is an American or an Iraqi injured on the battlefield, that is the quality of care that they are going to get.

I think we also heard the number that, you know, the vast majority of injuries today are coming from the IEDs. These things are becoming more and more sophisticated. But, you know, it shows that the enemy is not engaging us, they are moving to what we would call asymmetrical tactics. They are not engaging us or the Iraqis directly. They are using these improvised explosive devices or they are attacking civilian targets, where fitting to their name they can create terror.

But they are also using that tactic to try to divide the country between Sunnis and Shiia. And this is why the government has to, the Iraqi Government has to step up and provide the security envelope so that the militias can be disbanded, the militias that are forming in the Shiia areas and the Sunni areas. Because our understanding, when I talked to David Pate from my district, he said, you know, when you talk to the Iraqi soldiers, they do not say, if you ask them, are you a Shiia or a Sunni, the Army is moving to the level of professionalism where they say, you know, they do not say I am a Shiia or a Sunni, what they say is I am an Iraqi.

So they are focusing on the country. That is not everybody. You know, sectarian violence is something that we are very, very concerned about. It is evident. I do not think neither you or I are saying, man, it is done. There is a lot of work to do over there.

But there continue to be signs of real progress.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think the real progress that we are all looking for is for the Iraqis. Now that Prime Minister Maliki has got a government, and I think he needs to know that America is going to be there to support him.

You know, I was misquoted that I was in favor of immediate withdrawal. That is simply not true. What I have said consistently is America needs to be there for quite some time to come. We still have troops in Germany. We still have troops in Japan. We still have troops in South Korea. But our real role has to begin to change, so that we provide the umbrella of security.

If, for example, some militia being to mass and begin to directly confront the government or other forces, then I think from a conventional standpoint, we are in a strong position to make sure that that gets dealt with quickly and effectively. And nobody can do it better than our military.

But in terms of some of the sectarian things and the thugs who are at large in some of the neighborhoods, since we cannot speak the language and we do not understand the culture, it is just much more difficult for us to get to the bottom of that. That is where the Iraqis need to step up. That is the progress we are looking for.

When that happens, when people start to feel as secure in Baghdad as they do in Erbil, then you will see the economy begin to improve. Because, it is obvious to me that the overwhelming majority of Iraqis want what most Americans want. They want to live in peace. They want to be able to raise their families in a secure neighborhood. They want to look forward to an economic future that is worth living.

They can do that. And that is why, again, I hate to refer too much to what we saw up in northern Iraq. But it was like night and day. It was like going to a different universe.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think I misspoke earlier. I said the troops were in Erbil. They were in Balat. The troops were in Balat.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. We will always remember the North Dakota boys. Especially one young man, I think his name was Lynch. He had been involved in four of these explosions. And, yes, it is true the equipment they have is specially designed to sort of take the explosion and the concussion in a ''V'' section so that the folks inside are protected.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It is still a real experience.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. The concussion of it and what it did to those heavy vehicles, it is amazing that they have only had one KIA. Again, let me join you in sharing our sympathies to that family and that unit, because they were obviously a very close knit unit from North Dakota.

They went to war together. They do their jobs together. They live together. They pray together. And it was inspiring to meet those young men.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think you have also got to give a real set of kudos to the folks in the background. You know, we talk about the troops that are going out and they are finding the IEDs. We are talking to the C–130 pilots who are flying in. You and I were there. It is a harsh environment. You got the dust, you got the sand, you got more sand, and then you throw a little bit of heat on it.

When we were coming off the one plane in Erbil where we walked through the backwash of the props, it must have been 130, 140 degrees right there. Of course we were doing it for a short period of time. But you are wearing the body armor, you are wearing the helmet, our troops are doing that all day long.

The other folks, there is lot of folks over there that deserve kudos, but it is the maintenance people. These guys would say, hey, we go out, we are near an explosion, an IED, our equipment is damaged. We bring it back, our mechanics know that they need to get this fixed, because we are going out again on patrol.

They may have not a spare, but they have got another truck or another vehicle that they can take out. But, they have got to get this one working again. And the mechanics, they work 24 hours straight to get this stuff up and running.

Same thing with the C–130s. We are putting lots of hours on some of these machines. I think the first plane that we flew in on from Kuwait to Baghdad was a 1961 C–130, from Selfridge Air Base in Michigan. And, you know, there are maintenance people back there who in this environment, that plane goes on, I think it was doing two trips that day back and forth to Baghdad.

You know, when that plane goes back to Kuwait that night, there is going to be some maintenance people all over that thing, you know, getting it back and making sure that the next morning it is going to be able to fly again.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I mentioned earlier, we also need to say thank you and kudos to the families. You cannot help but think about what the families in North Dakota must feel every day. I am sure they do not know all that that group does in terms of going out and looking for these IEDs.

But not only do the folks in uniform, they pay quite a price for us, but their families, just worrying about what is going to happen today, what is going to happen tomorrow. You just really have to admire the families. And we need to say a special thank you to them. Because, you know, the guys that are over there, they are working hard all of the time. In fact, one of the things they said was we do not mind working long days and long hours because it helps the time go faster.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. There is not much else to do. But absolutely, you know, the families pay a tremendous price with the amount of time that their husbands or wives or sons or daughters are spending in Iraq, knowing that the conditions are tough, the environment continues to be dangerous. And so there are sacrifices that continue to be made by all of these families, by the whole military family.

You know, we were talking a little bit about comparing some of the stuff that we do in the United States. One of the things that is different about the United States and sometimes moves us a little bit away from the military, but when you go on one of these trips, what really does connect you back to the military is being there with the troops.

But, you know, the military folks are so few in number to who we are as a Nation. In Israel, since there is compulsory service, and I am not promoting compulsory service, but in Israel where everyone is required to serve in the military, everyone knows and understands the risks that the soldiers, military people have to take.

That is why I think it is good for, you know, that you have reminded us of, you know, that sacrifice, because too often we are too far away and removed. And it is ''somebody over there''. We have got to remember, it is not somebody over there. It is a neighbor, it is somebody from our community. They love this country.

They have got a family. They go to church. They share the values that we have. And they have just chosen a different career. You know, we have got

folks who have chosen business, finance, banking, marketing, whatever. These guys have chosen a career in the military.

It is a unique career. It is a special service that they provide to this country.

□ 2000

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I am going to close up here. If you have any closing thoughts, Chairman HOEKSTRA, go ahead. Then I am going to close up and yield it back here in just a few minutes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. No, I appreciate you doing the Special Order. I appreciate you yielding me the time and the opportunity. The one thing we did not talk about was Serbia, that on the way back we stopped in Serbia, so that we had an opportunity to see a part of Iraq that had been divided, that was coming out of a very tough time and after 14 years was prospering.

We then stopped overnight in Serbia, met with the three Presidents in Serbia at Sarajevo; and, again, there is an evolving success story that, 10 years ago, the brutal and the bitter conflict, we still have some troops there. There are a lot of Europeans, more European troops over there, but, again, they have made significant progress.

It takes a while to move from the ethnic religious strife to the steps forward. What is happening in Kosovo, or Serbia, and the region, is that the European Union finally embraced them, they have moved forward, Serbia is moving forward, Kurdistan is moving forward.

What we now also have to have is the modern Islamic or moderate states in the Middle East. They need to embrace Iraq. They need to invest. They need to have their people there, their businesses there, to show that they stand with this new democratically elected government and that they are invested in the success of a new Iraq, in what the people of Iraq are.

It is possible. It is not easy, but there are two examples of how this can work. It was very painful, but by sticking to it and moving through it, you can get to where you want to be.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to mention, and I am glad you did bring up the fact that we stopped in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I forget where I go sometimes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Sarajevo. I was in Sarajevo 10 years ago, and at that time the city was essentially in, the center city, essentially rubble. Many buildings had large pockmarks. Some of them are still there. Many, though, have been fixed; and it now is a vibrant city.

If I had predicted 10 years ago that we would see the life in the city that we saw, a lot of people said it cannot happen.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. But you can walk down, what is it called, Sniper Alley?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Yes, Sniper Alley.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. That we could walk down Sniper Alley Sunday night, and that we could walk through the streets of Sarajevo in Bosnia, and that we could walk through the streets of Bosnia on Monday morning, and, you know, that it was a vibrant city, people sitting at the cafes, drinking coffee and getting their country moving forward. Again, problems, high unemployment rate, slow economic development, but secure.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think we should share the story that the general told us about the man who worked at the military facility there. Every day, when he would come to work, he would stop, and this is a Bosnian individual, he would stop and salute the American flag.

Then he would say a prayer. When he would leave work that night, he would again salute the American flag. They had a special ceremony that finally, the general said, we need to do something for that guy. So they presented him with a U.S. flag, one of these little wood cases that we have around here.

When they presented it, he literally, with tears running down his cheeks, he said, I thank God every day for America and what America did to bring peace to this city, because it was America that saved us from that war.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It is why they are nervous about us pulling our final troops out, because we are the ones that have earned their trust, and they still look to you, and I both hope and pray for the day where the same type of result, as we see in Kosovo, as we see in Bosnia, that we can see that same kind of result in the rest of Iraq.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there are reasons to be optimistic. But I want to close with this quote. I started with this quote tonight:

''Do not try to do too much with your own hands . . . It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them.'' That quote is from T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia.

In some respects, I think it is prophetic. We can only do so much in Iraq. We are doing our share. Our military is doing a marvelous job. The next step, Mr. Chairman, is up to the Iraqis.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MCKINNEY (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and July 27.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, July 24, 2006, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8703. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment, Department of Defense, transmitting Notice of the decision to conduct a standard competition of the support services function performed by civilian personnel in the Department of the Navy for possible performance by private contractors, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2461; to the Committee on Armed Services.

8704. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting an annual report entitled, ''Defense Acquisition Challenge Program: Fiscal Year 2005,'' pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2359b(i); to the Committee on Armed Services.

8705. A letter from the Under Secretary for Domestic Finance, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the annual report on the Resolution Funding Corporation for calendar year 2005, pursuant to Public Law 101-73, section 501(a) (103 Stat. 387); to the Committee on Financial Services.

8706. A letter from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Thailand pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

8707. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's report on progress made in licensing and constructing the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, pursuant to Section 1810 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8708. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a

copy of D.C. ACT 16-439, ''Closing of Public Alleys in Square 749, S.O. 00-83, Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8709. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-441, ''Washington Stage Guild Tax Exemption Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8710. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-442, ''Solid Waste Disposal Fee Temporary Amendment Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8711. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-444, ''Fringe Lot Real Property Exclusive Rights Agreement Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8712. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-435, ''Drug Offense Driving Privileges Revocation and Disqualification Amendment Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8713. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-437, ''People First Respectful Language Conforming Amendment Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8714. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-438, ''People First Respectful Language Modernization Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8715. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-436, ''Closing of a Public Alley in Square 2910, S.O. 05-0587, Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8716. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-440, ''Official Fruit of the District of Columbia Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8717. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-433, ''Pedestrian Protection Bus Safety Amendment Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8718. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-434, ''Closing of Public Streets and Alleys in Squares 5318, 5319, and 5320 S.O. 04-14199, Act of 2006,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Government Reform.

8719. A letter from the Executive Director, National Council on Disability, transmitting the Council's Annual Performance Report to the President and Congress Fiscal Year 2005, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1116; to the Committee on Government Reform.

8720. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting the annual report entitled, ''Outer Continental Shelf Lease Sales: Evaluation of Bidding Results'' for Fiscal Year 2005, pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1337(a)(9); to the Committee on Resources.

8721. A letter from the FMCSA Regulatory Ombudsman, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Parts and Accessories Necessary for Safe Operation: Protection Against Shifting and Failing Cargo [Docket No. FMCSA-2006-21259] (RIN: 2126-AA88) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8722. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Weather Takeoff Minimums; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No. 30498; Amdt. No. 3170] received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8723. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No. 30499; Amdt. No. 3171] received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8724. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Modification of Class E Airspace; Scott City, KS [Docket No. FAA-2006-23896; Airspace Docket No. 06-ACE-2] received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8725. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100B, 747-200B, 747-200F, 747-300, 747-400, 747-400F, and 747SP Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24950; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-036-AD; Amendment 39-14627; AD 2006-12-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8726. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A321-100 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24953; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-084-AD; Amendment 39-14628; AD 2006-04-11 R1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8727. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model CL-600-2B19 (Regional Jet Series 100 & 440) Airplanes [Docket No. 2003-NM-223-AD; Amendment 39-14585; AD 2006-10-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8728. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited Model DHC-7 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24966; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-049-AD; Amendment 39-14629; AD 2006-12-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8729. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model ERJ 170-100 LR, -100 STD, -100 SE, and -100 SU Airplanes; and Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model ERJ 190-100 LR, -100STD, and -100 IGW Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24897; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-111-AD; Amendment 39-14619; AD 2006-11-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8730. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24815; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-101-AD; Amendment 39-14608; AD 2006-11-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8731. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Hamilton Sundstrand Model 14RF-9 Propellers [Docket No. FAA-2006-24517; Directorate Identifier 2006-NE-18-AD; Amendment 39-14591; AD 2006-10-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8732. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model EMB-120, -120ER, -120FC, -120QC, and -120RT Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24072; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-016-AD; Amendment 39-14614; AD 2006-11-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8733. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-23213; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-192-AD; Amendment 39-14615; AD 2006-11-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8734. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model CL-600-2B19 (Regional Jet Series 100 & 440) Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-23841; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-214-AD; Amendment 39-14613; AD 2006-11-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8735. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 767 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-23818; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-228-AD; Amendment 39-14616; AD 2006-11-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8736. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777-200 and -300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-20732; Directorate Identifier 2004-NM-278-AD; Amendment 39-14617; AD 2006-11-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8737. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 767-200 and -300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-22321; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-123-AD; Amendment 39-14610; AD 2006-11-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8738. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Model GV

and GV-SP Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-22034; Directorate Identifier 2004-NM-182-AD; Amendment 39-14607; AD 2006-11-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8739. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Model BAe 146 amd Avro 146-RJ Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24204; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-178-AD; Amendment 39-14612; AD 2006-11-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8740. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Model Hawker 800XP Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24084; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-017-AD; Amendment 39-14611; AD 2006-11-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8741. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc RB211 Series Turbofan Engines [Docket No. 2003-NE-12-AD; Amendment 39-14609; AD 2006-11-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8742. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited Model DHC-7 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-22146; Directorate Identifier 2002-NM-184-AD; Amendment 39-14606; AD 2006-11-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8743. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-600R and A300 F4-600R Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-23760; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-211-AD; Amendment 39-14605; AD 2006-11-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8744. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737-600, -700, -700C, -800, and -900 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2005-21028; Directorate Identifier 2004-NM-238-AD; Amendment 39-14601; AD 2006-10-17] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8745. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Engine Components Incorporated (ECi) Reciprocating Engine Connecting Rods [Docket No. FAA-2005-21331; Directorate Identifier 2005-NE-07-AD; Amendment 39-14605; AD 2006-10-21] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received July 12, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

8746. A letter from the Chief Financial Officer, Library of Congress, transmitting activities of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission Fund for the six-month period which ended on March 31, 2006, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. 188a-3; jointly to the Committees on House Administration and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 4165. A bill to clarify the boundaries of Coastal Barrier Resources System Clam Pass Unit FL–64P (Rept. 109–581). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 5057. A bill to authorize the Marion Park Project and Committee of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation to establish a commemorative work on Federal land in the District of Columbia, and its environs to honor Brigadier General Francis Marion; with amendments (Rept. 109–582). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 3817. A bill to withdraw the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest in New Mexico from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–583). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 2134. A bill to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Community to develop a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of a National Museum of the American Latino Community in Washington, DC, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–584 Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 3049. A bill to amend section 42 of title 18, United States Code, popularly known as the Lacey Act, to add certain species of carp to the list of injurious species that are prohibited from being imported or shipped (Rept. 109–585). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 5411. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–586). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 4947. A bill to expand the boundaries of the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109–587). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. POMBO: Committee on Resources. H.R. 4301. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain parcels of land acquired for the Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal features of the initial stage of the Oahe Unit, James Division, South Dakota, to the Commission of Schools and Public Lands and the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks of the State of South Dakota for the purpose of mitigating lost wildlife habitat, on the condition that the current preferential leaseholders shall have an option to purchase the parcels from the Commission, and for other purposes (Rept. 109–588). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. OXLEY: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 5121. A bill to modernize and update the National Housing Act and enable the Federal Housing Administration to use risk-based pricing to more effectively reach underserved borrowers, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 109–589). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

TIME LIMITATION OF REFERRED BILL

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII the following action was taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 2134. Referral to the Committee on House Administration extended for a period ending not later than September 29, 2006.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. HYDE (for himself and Mr. LANTOS):

H.R. 5847. A bill to amend the Arms Export Control Act to strengthen the requirements for congressional review of arms sales and exports under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. REYNOLDS:

H.R. 5848. A bill to increase the number of types of documents able to satisfy the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, and to ensure such documents are widely available and affordable; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HAYES:

H.R. 5849. A bill to increase the fine and prison term for textile transshipment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mr. WOLF, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. WEXLER, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. OWENS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. OLVER, and Mr. KLINE):

H.R. 5850. A bill to increase the safety of swimming pools and spas by establishing a swimming pool safety grant program administered by the Consumer Product Safety Commission to encourage States to improve their pool and spa safety laws, to educate the public about pool and spa safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. NEY (for himself and Mr. ABERCROMBIE):

H.R. 5851. A bill to reauthorize the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing assistance for Native Hawaiians; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. SIMMONS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 5852. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to enhance emergency communications at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes;

to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ANDREWS (for himself and Mr. GRAVES):

H.R. 5853. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to add a provision relating to reporting and recordkeeping for positions involving energy commodities; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BEAUPREZ:

H.R. 5854. A bill to establish a pilot program under which the Secretary of Education allows selected States to combine certain funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve the academic achievement of its students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. WYNN, Mr. HOYER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. STARK, Mr. OWENS, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. MCKINNEY):

H.R. 5855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the exclusion from gross income of certain wages of a certified master teacher, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. BOSWELL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota):

H.R. 5856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the allocation of the alternative fuel vehicle refueling property credit to patrons of agricultural cooperatives; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. RENZI, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. HAYWORTH, Mr. PASTOR, and Mr. FLAKE):

H.R. 5857. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1501 South Cherrybell Avenue in Tucson, Arizona, as the ''Morris K. 'Mo' Udall Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, and Mr. SCHIFF):

H.R. 5858. A bill to increase the United States financial and programmatic contributions to promote economic opportunities for women in developing countries; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. MCHENRY:

H.R. 5859. A bill to establish a commission to develop legislation designed to reform entitlement benefit programs and ensure a sound fiscal future for the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 5860. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an above-the-line deduction for State and local, and foreign, real property taxes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 5861. A bill to amend the National Historic Preservation Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.J. Res. 92. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to ensure a free and adequate education for every child who is a citizen; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ACKERMAN:

H.J. Res. 93. A joint resolution disapproving the issuance of letters of offer with respect to certain proposed sales of defense articles and defense services to Pakistan; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Ms. WATERS:

H. Con. Res. 452. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should provide full disclosure regarding the details of the deaths of members of the Armed Forces to their families at the earliest possible date; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 930. A resolution recognizing and honoring York for his role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 931. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that on August 27, 2006, people of goodwill throughout the United States should remember the victims of Hurricane Katrina, both living and dead, and pledge to work toward the repair, rebuilding, and resettlement of the Gulf Coast of the United States; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. BERRY:

H. Res. 932. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Congress should make additional emergency supplemental appropriations for necessary expenses for enforcement of laws relating to border security, immigration, and customs; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. NADLER):

H. Res. 933. A resolution commending agents, attorneys, and employees of the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GINGREY:

H. Res. 934. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Plan Ahead with an Advance Directive Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. JEFFERSON (for himself, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. ROSS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Ms. LEE, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BAKER, Mr. MCCRERY, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H. Res. 935. A resolution acknowledging the progress yet to be made in the rebuilding after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky:

H. Res. 936. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the City of Bowling Green, Kentucky, located in Warren County, can be proud of being a part of the history of the production of an American Icon, the Corvette, for 25 years; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mrs. MUSGRAVE:

H. Res. 937. A resolution to congratulate Fort Collins, Colorado, on being named the best place to live in the United States for 2006; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. STUPAK (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, and Mr. GERLACH):

H. Res. 938. A resolution requesting that the President focus appropriate attention on neighborhood crime prevention and community policing, and coordinate certain Federal efforts to participate in ''National Night Out'', which occurs the first Tuesday of August each year, including by supporting local efforts and community watch groups and by supporting local officials, to promote community safety and help provide homeland security; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

406. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Maine, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 1500 memorializing the Secretary of the Navy to Honor the gift of 1,000 achres known as Brunswick Commons bestowed in 1719 by the Pejepscot Proprietors to the Town of Brunswick forever and return it to the town at no cost; to the Committee on Armed Services.

407. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Florida, relative to House Memorial No. 541 urging the Congress of the United States to support a National Catastrophe Insurance Program; to the Committee on Financial Services.

408. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 247 memorializing the Congress of the United States to enact the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

409. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, relative to a Resolution memorializing the Congress of the United States to pass Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 apologizing to all Native American Peoples on behalf of the United States; to the Committee on Resources.

410. Also, a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 911 urging the reauthorization of the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

411. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Tennessee, relative to Senate Resolution No. 158 memorializing the Congress of the United States to enact the ''Constitution Restoration Act of 2005''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

412. Also, a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 574 urging the Congress of the United States to propose, adopt, and submit to the states for ratification a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

413. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 269 memorializing the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to make the Republic of Poland eligible for the United States Department of State Visa Waiver Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

414. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Maine, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 1508 memorializing the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Justice to establish satellite voting for displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

415. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of New Jersey, relative to Senate Resolution No. 29 requesting that Rutgers University assist the ''Flood Mitigation Task Force'' to determine causes and solutions to flooding in New Jersey; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

416. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Resolution No. 9 memorializing the Congress of the United States to address problems in the Department of Veterans Affairs related to the provisions of health care and benefits, the adjudication of claims, accountability, and outreach and to enact legislation that creates an appropriation formula that ensures predictable and adequate funding for the health care problems of the Veterans Health Administration; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

417. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, relative to a Resolution memorializing the Congress of the United States to provide relief from growing energy costs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

418. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Resolution No. 720 encouraging the President of the United States to extend the benefits of free trade by enacting a free trade agreement between the United States and Taiwan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

419. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Illinois, relative to Senate Resolution No. 630 urging the Congress of the United States to enact a prescription drug benefit for senior citizens that is run by the Medicare program itself; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

420. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, relative to a Resolution affirming the civil rights and liberties of the people of Massachusetts; jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary, Intelligence (Permanent Select), and Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 65: Mr. SPRATT.

H.R. 450: Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 503: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 550: Mrs. KELLY and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 552: Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota.

H.R. 614: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 759: Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 817: Mr. WELLER, Mr. NUSSLE, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. HERGER, Mr. LINDER, Mr. GILLMOR, and Mr. MANZULLO.

H.R. 864: Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. POE, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mr. MCNULTY.

H.R. 898: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 934: Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. STRICKLAND.

H.R. 947: Mr. ISTOOK.

H.R. 964: Mr. PAYNE and Mr. RAMSTAD.

H.R. 1020: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 1108: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 1131: Ms. HARMAN.

H.R. 1227: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 1329: Mrs. BONO and Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 1358: Mr. BOREN.

H.R. 1471: Mrs. TAUSCHER and Mr. MATHESON.

H.R. 1554: Mr. JINDAL.

H.R. 1578: Miss MCMORRIS and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 2088: Mr. NUSSLE, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. RENZI.

H.R. 2090: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 2421: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. PICKERING.

H.R. 2458: Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 2488: Mr. CLYBURN.

H.R. 2568: Mr. HINCHEY.

H.R. 2671: Mr. MELANCON.

H.R. 2828: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 2840: Mr. PAUL.

H.R. 2965: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. MARCHANT, and Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 3186: Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

H.R. 3195: Mr. FORTUÑO and Mr. MARKEY.

H.R. 3196: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 3248: Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia and Mr. GOODE.

H.R. 3282: Mr. DENT.

H.R. 3436: Mr. MCCOTTER and Mr. PAUL.

H.R. 3547: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 3559: Mr. GRAVES.

H.R. 3603: Mrs. BONO.

H.R. 3762: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 3795: Mr. HOEKSTRA and Mr. KIRK.

H.R. 3874: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 3936: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 3949: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.

H.R. 4047: Mr. STEARNS.

H.R. 4188: Mr. HIGGINS and Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 4212: Mr. OBERSTAR.

H.R. 4236: Mr. REHBERG.

H.R. 4239: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4264: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4291: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. COOPER.

H.R. 4366: Ms. BEAN.

H.R. 4403: Mr. OTTER, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. JEFFERSON.

H.R. 4517: Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 4547: Mr. RENZI.

H.R. 4560: Mr. MURPHY.

H.R. 4562: Mr. BONILLA, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. MICA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FARR, and Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 4747: Mr. MELANCON and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 4751: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania and Mr. FORD.

H.R. 4800: Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 5013: Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California.

H.R. 5022: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 5052: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.

H.R. 5092: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. POMBO, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. RENZI, and Mr. MACK.

H.R. 5120: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 5121: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 5139: Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan and Mr. STARK.

H.R. 5166: Ms. HERSETH.

H.R. 5171: Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 5185: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota and Mrs. TAUSCHER.

H.R. 5212: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 5236: Mr. MOORE of Kansas and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 5247: Ms. HARMAN.

H.R. 5248: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 5316: Mr. OLVER and Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 5319: Mrs. KELLY.

H.R. 5344: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 5351: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 5371: Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 5372: Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. SNYDER.

H.R. 5396: Mr. WEXLER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Mr. ETHERIDGE.

H.R. 5397: Mr. GORDON and Mrs. CAPITO.

H.R. 5472: Mr. COSTA, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. BUYER, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. HONDA, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. WALSH, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. EMANUEL.

H.R. 5500: Mrs. NORTHUP and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.

H.R. 5513: Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, and Mr. SWEENEY.

H.R. 5536: Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 5555: Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 5598: Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 5613: Mr. PITTS and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 5624: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H.R. 5642: Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mrs. MALONEY.

H.R. 5674: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina and Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 5682: Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 5700: Mr. BACHUS.

H.R. 5704: Mrs. DRAKE and Mr. WELDON of Florida.

H.R. 5755: Mr. OTTER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. FOLEY.

H.R. 5758: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 5766: Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 5770: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H.R. 5771: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. KUCINICH, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 5772: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina and Mr. MCCRERY.

H.R. 5805: Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 5806: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. WATERS, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mrs. MCCARTHY.

H.R. 5818: Mr. FEENEY, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. WICKER.

H.R. 5825: Mr. RAMSTAD.

H.R. 5830: Mr. POE and Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 5834: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, and Mr. KUCINICH.

H.R. 5835: Mr. MORAN of Kansas and Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 5837: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. CLAY.

H. Con. Res. 174: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. WEXLER, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. SHAYS.

H. Con. Res. 197: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H. Con. Res. 222: Mr. MCKEON.

H. Con. Res. 411: Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. AKIN, and Mr. WHITFIELD.

H. Con. Res. 415: Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. CROWLEY, and Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H. Con. Res. 416: Mr. YOUNG of Florida and Mr. CALVERT.

H. Con. Res. 424: Mr. KLINE, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. WELLER, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. OTTER, and Mr. BEAUPREZ.

H. Con. Res. 425: Mr. ISRAEL.

H. Res. 295: Mr. MCHUGH and Mr. REYNOLDS.

H. Res. 490: Ms. BORDALLO and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H. Res. 707: Mr. ANDREWS and Mrs. KELLY.

H. Res. 838: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. SNYDER, and Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.

H. Res. 848: Mr. CHABOT.

H. Res. 874: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. OWENS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. PAYNE, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H. Res. 880: Miss MCMORRIS.

H. Res. 888: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H. Res. 912: Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. SOUDER.

H. Res. 926: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Mr. PEARCE.

H. Res. 928: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. PAYNE.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS—ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

The following Member added his name to the following discharge petition:

Petition 11 by Mr. BARROW on House Resolution 614: Mr. Leach.