There was no objection.

NO FOREIGN TRADE AGREEMENTS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin tonight by again talking about the Central American Free Trade Agreement. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that in spite of what supporters of CAFTA say, the buying power of countries in Central America simply will not have an impact on American exports.

Central America represents only $62 billion in generating economic power. That means that people in Central America will not be able to buy cars from Ohio, or steel from West Virginia, they will not be able to buy software from Seattle or textiles or apparel from North Carolina.

The fact is that CAFTA will only mean more outsourcing of American jobs, more loss of American jobs, more loss of American manufacturing and does nothing to raise the living standards of Central Americans.

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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order now.

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

There was no objection.

IN SUPPORT OF LIEUTENANT PANTANO

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. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to once again ask for my colleagues to support Second Lieutenant Ilario Pantano, a Marine who has served our Nation bravely in both Gulf Wars and who now stands accused of murder for defending himself and his country.

During his service in Iraq last year, Lieutenant Pantano was faced with a very difficult situation that caused him to make a split-second decision to defend his life. He felt threatened by the actions of two insurgents under his watch; and in an act of self-defense, he had to resort to force.

Two and a half months later, a sergeant under his command who never even saw the shooting accused him of murder. Mr. Speaker, next month, April 25, there will be an Article 32 hearing to determine whether or not Lieutenant Pantano will face a court martial for murder. If convicted by a court martial, Lieutenant Pantano can be subject to the death penalty for an action that he took in self-defense on the battlefield.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening to this young man is an injustice. Over the past couple of weeks I have stood here in this very spot quoting those who support him and his fight for justice.

In his fitness report months after the alleged crime took place, his superiors praised his leadership and talents and even suggested that he was worthy of promotion.

Respected journalists, from Mona Charen to the Washington Times editorial board, have defended him as an upstanding citizen and Marine. Veterans and fellow Marines from across this Nation have heard his story and have been outraged by the charge against him. They believe, as I do, that to put doubt in the minds of our soldiers is to condemn them to death.

Mr. Speaker, I have put in a resolution, House Resolution 167, to support Lieutenant Pantano as he faces these allegations. I hope that my colleagues in the House will take the time to read my resolution and look into this situation for themselves.

Lieutenant Pantano's mother has a Web site that I also encouraged people to visit. The address is defendthedefenders.org. I hope and pray that when Lieutenant Pantano faces his Article 32 hearing next Monday, he will be exonerated of all charges.

Our Marines, soldiers, airmen and sailors risk their lives to protect our freedoms. Having them second-guess their actions in war is dangerous for their safety and for our national security.

Lieutenant Pantano stood by his corps and his country through two wars. He left a loving family and a 6-figure salary to reenlist after September the 11th. I ask that we now stand by him as he faces this battle for his life.

Mr. Speaker, with that I will close by saying, may God please bless our men and women in uniform and their families. And please, God, be with Lieutenant Pantano and his family. And I ask God to please bless America.

DO NOT SUPPORT CAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, earlier today, nearly two dozen House and Senate Members, a large number of Members of both parties, held a news conference with about 175 to 200 people representing a whole host of organizations in opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Those groups were as diverse as textile manufacturers, as sugar farmers, as environmentalists, labor organizations, religious groups, all kinds of groups, all kinds of organizations, all kinds of individuals in opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Madam Speaker, sometime in the next 6 weeks, this legislation, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, will come to the House floor for a vote, according to Republican majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS.)

The supporters of the Central American Free Trade Agreement have told Members of Congress, have told the public, have told newspapers that the Central American Free Trade Agreement will create jobs for Americans, it will create more opportunities to manufacture goods and export them to Central America, it will help farmers and small businesses and manufacturers and consumers and all kinds of groups and people in our country.

The problem is that is the exact same thing that supporters of the North American Free Trade Agreement told us a dozen years ago. It is the exact same promise that sponsors of entry into the World Trade Organization told us about 10 years ago; it is the same promise that they told us when we considered the China PNTR, Permanent Normal Trade Relations, most favored nation status for China; this is the same promise they made on a half dozen other trade agreements.

Yet, in every case, after every trade agreement, we lost more manufacturing jobs, we saw our environmental and food safety standards weakened, we saw less prosperity within those countries with whom we traded, whether it was Mexico, whether it was China, whether it was country after country after country.

Wages continued to stagnate in those countries, and wages continue to stagnant in our country. People actually earn less in real dollars today than they did a year ago before the last trade agreement. On issue after issue they continue to make these promises, and they generally failed to live up to these promises.

Madam Speaker, I would call your attention to this chart. The year I ran for Congress in 1992, the United States had a trade deficit of $38 billion, $38 billion in 1992, 13 years ago. You can see how this trade deficit got bigger and bigger and bigger.

Today our trade deficit, through the year 2004, our trade deficit was $618 billion. It went from $38 billion just about a dozen years later $618 approximately.

That means more Americans, more American jobs are exported, more American job losses, and that is bad news not just for manufacturing and the people that own those companies; it is bad news for American workers, it is bad news for our communities, it is bad news for our schools and our families.

And if we really want to talk about American values, then we ought to be talking about what these trade agreements do to our children, do to our families, what they do to the school systems, what they do to police and fire protection, school districts, police districts and fire districts; and cities lose more and more tax revenue.

The fact is the promises of the Central American Free Trade Agreement are again the same as they were under NAFTA, the same as they were under China trade, the same as they were under the legislation setting up the World Trade Organization. But what we see time and time again is more trade deficit, more hemorrhaging of American jobs.

Now, when they talk about CAFTA, the six countries in Central America that this trade agreement involves with the United States under that, the entire economies of these six countries are equal to the economy of Columbus, Ohio or the State of Kansas, or Orlando, Florida. Their buying power is such in those countries, those six countries, as poor as they are, and as small as they are, they simply do not have the buying power to buy American products. Guatemalans and Nicaraguans and the people in Honduras and Costa Rica and El Salvador simply do not have the money to buy cars manufactured in Ohio, or steel made in West Virginia. They do not have the purchasing power to buy textiles and apparel from Georgia, South Carolina, from North Carolina.

They do not have the money or the purchasing power or the income to buy software from Seattle or high-tech products from California. Madam Speaker, what this trade agreement is about is what all of these trade agreements are about: they are about cheap labor, no environmental regulation, weak worker safety laws. We need to vote ''no'' on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

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.)

NO EARMARKS IN HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, the House Appropriations Committee floated a trial balloon in some of the newspapers that cover Congress. They indicated that they might allow earmarks into this year's appropriation bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

Not surprisingly, the announcement has elicited little reaction outside the Beltway where Americans pay little attention to the arcane ins and outs of congressional appropriation bills.

The same cannot be said for K Street where lobbyists can barely contain their glee at the prospect of another appropriations bill to fill with earmarks. By opening up the door to earmarks in the homeland security appropriations bill, we are opening a Pandora's box of government waste, pork-barrel spending, and weakened homeland security.

In the 2 years since its inception, the Homeland Security appropriations bill has been free of earmarks. House leaders have recognized that something as important as the bill funding national security agencies ought to be absent of earmarks.

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I am puzzled as to why we now suddenly believe that earmarking homeland security funds is an acceptable practice. There are a number of reasons why earmarks would corrupt the homeland security appropriations process, but unquestionably the most serious is that it would jeopardize our national security.

A few months ago defense analysts complained, the news that earmarks in the defense appropriations bill had put the lives of our troops at risk. They argue that congressional earmarks had drained the pot of available money for supplies like body armor or Humvee armor for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. You can be sure that earmarking homeland security funds will have the same effect.

The Congress created the Department of Homeland Security to assess domestic threats to our country and address them. Now, after only 2 years of funding the department, Congress believes it knows how best to allocate these funds. Congressional oversight of this department is vital and that is why congressional earmarking is so dangerous.

Homeland security earmarks are also sure to slip down the pork barrel slope so many other appropriations bills have gone down. It will not be long before Members are inserting earmarks for projects with only a modest relevance to homeland security. A first responders hall of fame project, for example, or a port security museum. The possibilities are as endless as appropriators' imaginations.

Anyone who believes that such a scenario is a stretch needs only to give a cursory look at the more than 4,000 earmarks in this year's transportation bill. Members will be hard pressed to vote against a bill intended to protect our national security even if it is over budget or stuffed with pork. For that reason, lobbyists will view it as a must-pass vehicle for earmarks.

Adding earmarks to the homeland security appropriations bill is clearly bad policy, but I also believe that for Republicans it is bad politics as well. The earmarking process was abused by the Democrats, but I am sad to say that during Republican control of Congress we have made it much worse. It is no wonder that the Republican Party, the party of fiscal constraint since the New Deal, has seen public trust in its ability to balance the books evaporate.

For the most part, Americans no longer believe that Republicans are more fiscally prudent than Democrats. I cannot say that I blame them. Every Republican who values serving in the majority should be troubled by this trend.

Further, I worry that by opening up the homeland security bill to earmarks, we would let public distrust of our handling of fiscal issues spill over into national security. While it may be hard to tell the difference between Republicans and Democrats on spending, there is still a very real difference when it comes to national security. It would be a shame to let our growing appetite for earmarks jeopardize our ability to lead on national security.

Just how far Republicans have strayed for limited government orthodoxy was apparent recently when a current Member of this body ran for reelection a decade after he had first been in this body. He told of being approached by legions of lobbyists and local officials, each wanting to know how he would proceed to help them get earmarks for local projects. But I am a Republican, was his response. We know, was their retort.

What a sad commentary this is on our party.

I was elected to Congress with aspirations higher than groveling from crumbs that fall from appropriators' tables. I suspect that this is the case with each of my colleagues. Yet, we are quickly approaching a point where that would simply be an apt description of our jobs.

Madam Speaker, it is time to reverse course. To do so, we need to shoot down this trial balloon. The last thing we need to do is open up the $32 billion fund, the Homeland Security bill to pork barrel spending.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS 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. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.