

hiring process I was given a package of benefits that I was entitled to. This included a pension package that the company said they would control and have for me upon my retirement. As I worked for the company, and union contracts were renegotiated, the pension package was still included. Now it seems, Delphi wants to take back the pensions and the contracts that were signed in good faith, while I and thousands like me, worked to make huge profits for the company. I felt my pension and benefits were secure all those years that I worked here."

Mr. Lauder of Somerset New Jersey wrote, "I have lived in the same area all my life except for the 4 years I served my country in the U.S. Navy on a military leave of absence from GM. I have worked at this facility for 32 years, starting at age 18. The hazards of these plants are well known. The industrial atmosphere that we work in holds many perils, such as dangerous machinery, extreme temperatures, hazardous chemicals, asbestos, et cetera. We were not always aware of some of the hazards and the effect on our health, but over the years, the unions and more responsible government representatives fought for information and equipment to protect us.

These are the types of jobs the American blue collar workforce took to feed, clothe and educate our family in the hopes of creating a better world for them. The deal was that we would do our part to help the corporations rake in billions made off of our sweat and labor, and when our time was up we could look forward to a modest pension and medical benefits."

□ 2000

"A living wage was also part of the deal so we could better the lives of our children so they could grow into healthy, educated, and productive individuals, to be contributors and not burdens on our society.

"That used to be the 'American Way,' the basis for the betterment of our great country and the world. Now it seems the Robber Barons are back."

You can hear the pride and the patriotism that comes through in this testimony from these workers.

Writes another worker: "I've been on this job for 16 years and have been a loyal and dedicated employee from day one. Over the years there have been changes, but this kind of change is a harsh one to swallow. Delphi would like to take away our negotiated benefits and leave my family and me with nothing. I have a son who would like to start college next year. My wife and I have explained to him that this just may not happen right now because of the bankruptcy proceedings that are under way. Please imagine if this was the situation you were in, how would you feel and what would you do?"

Another, Mr. Hagopian from Somerset, New Jersey, writes: "This whole bankruptcy was planned. If you let this happen," the Delphi deal, "every other

U.S. company will do the same thing . . ."

You can hear the pride and patriotism. It comes through so clearly. Now, I ask will those who engineer the plans to strip these workers of their pensions and their benefits ever understand what these men and women are going through?

A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE IRAQI PEOPLE

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I want to salute tonight the brave men and women who are fighting in Iraq to bring democracy to the Middle East and hopefully help turn around nations, particularly Arab nations, that the U.N. has said when you add up the gross domestic product of all 22 Arab nations, their gross domestic product is smaller than Italy's. This is a U.N. report that pointed out that in the last 10 years these Arab nations collectively have had declining productivity and that they have not brought forward any inventions or innovations to contribute to world prosperity.

We are in Iraq to help the Iraqi people have a new beginning and hopefully change the face of the Middle East.

I have been to Iraq 11 times, and I have had good visits and I have had bad visits. I have had visits where I have had tremendous hope and then the recognition that we have made some mistakes. In April, 2003, there was tremendous hope. But then we proceeded, unfortunately, to disband their army, their police, and their border patrol, and that resulted in the requirement of American troops and British troops and very few coalition forces to defend 24 million people in a country the size of California.

So what I saw when I went back after April, 2003, when I went in August and then in December and then early in the spring of the next year, things were getting worse. But I began to see it turn around in June of 2004 as we transferred power to the Iraqis. A significant decision. It took it away from Defense and gave it to State Department, and State Department had a better sense of how to help this government, not how to fight the war.

The war is still being fought by our own troops. But as well, we started to train their police, their border patrol, and their army, and they have become very confident.

And what I then saw in 2005 were three elections in Iraq. I was there for the first one. I remember asking if I could stick my finger in that ink jar, and this Kuwaiti woman looked up at me and she said, No. She said, You are not an Iraqi.

That gave me a chill because she did not say I was not a Kurd. She was a Kurd. She said I was not an Iraqi.

And then what I saw was another election. I was there a week before, after now creating a government that was elected, creating a constitution and ratifying this constitution. This constitution was ratified with 79 percent favoring it, and then they proceeded to elect a government at the end of last year.

I can tell you why I know it was a success. The press did not talk about it. Seventy-six percent voted of 100 percent. In other words, of all adults, not the two-thirds that bothered to register, not 76 percent of two-thirds; 76 percent of all adults.

And now we have seen a very dicey moment. The Sunni insurgents are playing their trump card. Not their last straw, not their final gasp. They are playing their trump card, and they may succeed if the Shias give in to sectarian violence. And we are trying to make them understand that they are the majority and they can run this country. Do not allow the Sunni insurgents to get them to do what would be the stupidist thing, to give in to the violence, to give in to a civil war, and then fail.

We are going to leave Iraq when the Iraqis ask us to leave or if they give up. If they give up to the sectarian violence, we will move our troops away from harm's way and we will take them out. But they are so close and they have done so much. I have met such brave Iraqi men and women.

Quickly, one Iraqi man, Al-Alusi, after the election he lost his two sons. His security had been taken away because he had gone to Israel, and he came to visit me later in 2005, and I said, You cannot go back. You are a marked man. You are a dead man walking.

He looked at me with some surprise and said, I have to go back. My country needs me.

Which is to introduce one point I would love to make: When I ask Iraqis what their biggest fear is, it is not the bombing. Their biggest fear is that you will leave us, that you will give us a taste of democracy and then you will leave us.

Let me just conclude by saying this: That very man who went back to Iraq is now an elected member of the assembly. He is a very brave man, and he is typical of the Iraqis who are grasping very hard to have a democracy and to have a better future.

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

(Mr. KILDEE 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 (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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