

the shooting of the drug smuggler constitutes an administrative error that should have been addressed. However, the application of 18 U.S.C. §924(c) to two U.S. Border Patrol agents in lawful possession of their firearms appears grossly inappropriate. Because agents Ramos and Compean were required to carry firearms during the course of their duties, I urge you to consider commuting this 10-year mandatory minimum sentence enhancement.

Mr. President, the end of your term is quickly approaching and time is running out for you to heed the calls of the American people and reverse the grave injustice committed against agents Ramos and Compean. No useful purpose is served by the continued incarceration of these distinguished law enforcement officers. During this Christmas season, a time of peace and thanksgiving for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, I urge you to open your heart to the pleas of the American people and commute the sentences of these two Hispanic-American heroes.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

A response from the White House said that the agents' requests for commutation "are receiving a careful and fair review." If the President takes the time to personally review the agents' case, I am confident the facts will lead him to the same conclusion that the majority of Americans have already reached: The indictments against these men were unjustified.

The President should carefully consider one of the most troubling aspects of this case: The agents were charged under a statute intended for violent criminals carrying guns, not for law enforcement officers acting in the line of duty. Because the border agents were required to carry firearms during the course of their duties, I urge the President to commute the 10-year mandatory sentence for these charges.

Mr. Speaker, time is running out for the President to reverse this grave injustice committed against Ramos and Compean. I pray that he will open his heart to the pleas of the American people and commute the sentences of these two deserving men.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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.)

IT'S TIME TO GIVE DIPLOMACY A CHANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. A breath of fresh air filled the Capitol this morning. It happened during the confirmation hearings for HILLARY CLINTON. The Secretary of State-designate in her testimony said that "diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy" in the Obama administration.

□ 1945

This is exactly what the American people have been waiting 8 long years to hear. The current administration never used diplomacy, and the results have been devastating for us and for the world. The occupation of Iraq hasn't made us any safer. It has cost over \$1 trillion so far, helping to put our economy into a deep recession. It has devastated our reputation in the world. All of this is clear to just about everyone except our current leaders in the White House.

At his press conference yesterday, President Bush insisted that the occupation of Iraq hasn't damaged America's moral standing in the world. But his administration's policy of shooting first, asking questions later, has badly damaged our Nation's moral authority.

The use of torture has damaged it even more. Yesterday President Bush called the human rights abuses at Abu Ghraib a disappointment. But in recent weeks we have seen convincing evidence that Abu Ghraib was the result of deliberate administration policy. Talk about disappointment.

In February of 2002, the President signed an order stating that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to members of al Qaeda or the Taliban. Then high-ranking American officials took a series of actions that made torture a part of our interrogation practices in Iraq and elsewhere. Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was one of the officials who gave his stamp of approval.

A bipartisan report issued by the Senate Armed Services Committee on December 11 documented this illegal action and how these actions came about. According to the committee, the authorization of aggressive interrogation techniques by senior officials conveyed the message that it was okay to retreat and degrade.

Then a week after the committee issued its report, Vice President CHENEY gave a shocking interview to the Washington Times. In the interview, he admitted that 33 prisoners were subjected to what he called "enhanced interrogation techniques." That's fancy bureaucratic language for torture. He even admitted that prisoners were subjected to waterboarding, which has been considered a form of torture ever since the Spanish Inquisition.

I know that conservatives like Vice President CHENEY have looked backwards for their policies, but the 15th century, Mr. Speaker, is much too far back. Look at the consequences of these policies of war, occupation and torture. The Middle East continues to be in turmoil and flames. Iran's influ-

ence continues to spread. People all around the globe have a negative opinion of the United States, which makes it much harder for us to get their help.

When America loses its moral authority, Osama bin Laden and other terrorists find it a lot easier to recruit new members. But with the change in our Nation's leadership on January 20, America has new hope. We have new hope for the future.

In addition to her comments about diplomacy this morning, HILLARY CLINTON said that "We must build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries," and she promised to work with Congress and not to treat us with contempt, as the current administration has. She said, and I quote her, "For me, consultation is not a catchword—it's a commitment."

And she quoted Terence, the Roman playwright, who said, "In every endeavor, the seemly course for wise (people) is to try persuasion first."

The current administration tried war and occupation for 8 years, and it didn't work, so it's time to give diplomacy a chance.

YOUR HARD-EARNED MONEY BELONGS TO YOU

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, this summer, spring, we sent Americans a stimulus check to help stimulate the economy. We actually gave them some money. We had already spent the money that they had given us for taxes, and so we went and borrowed some money and sent that money to the American people to let them try to stimulate our economy.

Evidently that didn't work as well as a lot of people thought it would, and so now there is a movement to spend much more, larger amount, triple, quadruple the amount of money that was spent this spring. Guess what? We don't have the money, and so we are going to go and borrow it.

So what we are on is this system of tax, spend, borrow. Tax, spend, borrow. It isn't working. The American people know that that's not the right prescription for getting us out of this economic slump. Yet that is the plan that will be brought before this body possibly this week.

This is going to be a big week for your children and grandchildren. We are going to have a \$350 billion second half of the stimulus or the bailout program, and now we are talking about nearly \$1 trillion in new spending for a stimulus package, \$1.3 trillion.

My friend from Texas spoke about the fact that Members from Congress are using their voting cards as credit cards. It's time, actually, for Members of Congress to start using their cards not as credit cards and mortgaging the future of our young people, but investing and beginning to spend money that

we actually have, instead of spending money we do not have.

This unrestrained borrowing and spending has got to stop because it's not working. Now, one of the things that we need to do to actually begin to stimulate the economy is just leave the money in the economy. How do we leave the money in the economy?

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we do is we lower the taxes. We lower the taxes on individuals. We lower the taxes on corporations. We lower the taxes on small businesses.

Our small businesses, for example, are the number one job creators in America. By lowering the taxes for small businesses, we are able to create jobs and opportunity. Whether it's Joe the Plumber or Ray the Electrician, when they have the opportunity to keep more of the money that they are making, they go out and buy a new service truck.

Well, you know what happens when they buy a new service truck? They have got to go hire someone to run that truck, so they go out and hire an electrician or a plumber and maybe a helper. So that creates more and more jobs.

But every time we take more and more of the money of Joe the Plumber or Ray the Electrician or the American hardworking people, when we take that money into Congress or into the government, one, that dollar gets a lot smaller when it goes back out and, yet, so we are taking, the net effect is, we are taking money out of the economy.

I introduced a bill last week that would try to leave the money in the economy. What this bill would do would be lower each one of the tax brackets by—the tax rate on each one of the brackets by 5 percent.

Also, it would make the top brackets in this country, both corporate and individual, 25 percent. That means that we have a further reduction in the amount of money that we take out of the economy on a daily, weekly and annual basis.

Now, what could this do? Well, according to the Heritage Foundation, this could help create more jobs in our country. Possibly in 2009 it could create a half a million new jobs; by the year 2012, 3.6 million new jobs.

If Americans and the American people are going to enjoy the freedoms and liberties that this Nation offers, the best way to do that is to allow them to have the opportunity to work and to earn their money, but, more importantly, to keep more of their money.

One of the things that we have done in this country that concerns me, I think it concerns the American people, is this country was founded on principles of empowerment. People came to America with dreams that they would work hard, apply themselves. And if they did that, they could reap the benefits of their hard work and enjoy their successes.

But, unfortunately, in our country today, they were running away from

big government. Now the country that was founded on the principles of small business is moving more to big government. And how is the government getting bigger? It's taking a bigger and bigger chunk out of the American people's, American taxpayers' hard-earned money.

Mr. Speaker, these are difficult times, yet they are challenging times, but they are times where we must make good decisions. Going out and mortgaging another \$1.3 billion for future generations to pay back is not a good investment.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill so that we can leave more money with the American taxpayers. The American taxpayers deserve a better plan from the Federal government than more spending on top of a deficit already projected to be more than \$1 trillion this year.

Congress should focus on solutions that empower individuals and businesses to succeed in the economy, rather than solutions that make them more dependent on the Federal government.

WALL STREET'S BANKSTERS ARE COMING BACK TO MAMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, wake up, America. Get your telephone calls going to Congress. Set up your robodials in gear. Wall Street's banksters are coming back to mama. Here they come again, and shame on us if we let them do it to us again.

America, pay attention. Batten down the hatches. Let your Member of Congress know the banksters are coming back to mama.

We are about to be taken for a ride by the banksters again. These banksters bank on us making the taxpayers pay again.

Don't let them do it. Why? Because what they are doing is trampling our democracy. We are getting set to have another piece of legislation crammed through the Congress regarding the bailout. They call it TARP, the Troubled Assets Relief Program. It's the old bank bailout bill from last year.

Despite the fact that due deliberation is required of us as Members of Congress through regular order of this House, and, frankly, our Constitution, this new cram down comes with a twist. Instead of not holding any hearings on the reform of the TARP, like happened last time, and only letting us see the bill 18 hours before \$700 billion of the taxpayers' money was to be put on the table, one hearing is being held, exactly one, tomorrow, and it happens to be being held at the same time that amendments to that bill are supposed to be filed upstairs in the Rules Committee.

So Members who spent over 20 years on that committee are unable to take

what they hear at the hearing, and the information learned, to make recommendations for amendments to the Rules Committee. Any Member who might not be on the committee, and who wants to go to the hearing and listen, and then maybe propose amendments, well, you can't do that because it's being held at the same time.

The committee will be holding the hearing here in the Capitol where most Americans can no longer afford to travel. They are not bothering to go out to the country, to the communities that have been so badly devastated by the rising foreclosure crisis, that the TARP, the bank bailout bill is not solving.

No, the public won't be included, and the subpoena power of the committee will not be used. So here we go, the banksters are back. They want another \$350 billion of our taxpayers' money, and the deliberations inside this Chamber are throttled. Isn't that sad, particularly given what happened to the first 350 billion. Once again, we are being pushed and told we have to hurry this up. We are going to have a new President. So we are told to hurry up and be hasty and not be thoughtful, because, of course, something might happen. But you know what? It's already happening.

What we are doing isn't working. But we are going to have to be voting this week on a big unthinkable wad of our taxpayers' money, \$350 billion more. And if we learned anything from the release of the first half of the TARP funds, it's that hurried legislative action brings undesired and sloppy results.

Back in the fall we were told we didn't have the time to be deliberative, that if we didn't pass it, the economy was going to continue a downward spiral, that the economy would crash, and we would be to blame.

Well, some Members voted for it, and it passed, and guess what happened? What they said wouldn't. Never mind that Secretary Paulson's management of the economy and the bailout still has resulted in 1.2 million jobs lost in November and December. Believe me, people in my State know what those numbers really mean.

One in 10 homeowners are in arrears or in foreclosure, imagine that, 10 percent of the people who own homes in this country.

□ 2000

And \$4 trillion of wealth has been lost by our families. The American people were played, and \$350 billion later Secretary Paulson has given us no progress for the American people. We are in a deeper economic hole than when we began.

TARP isn't working. It hasn't stemmed the foreclosure crisis, which is at the heart of what is wrong with our economy. It didn't help unfreeze credit inside our financial system. The auto industry didn't go into a nose-dive because people didn't want to buy cars.