

International Economic Policy and Trade Subcommittee, I came to better appreciate the advent and permanence of rapid technological change and its immediate effects on our national security and economic prosperity.

These considerations have persuaded me of the importance of updating the Export Administration Act. I have concluded that passage of S. 149, as reported, is the prudent way ahead both to protect our national security and to enhance our economic prosperity. I am convinced this bill gets it right. The Administration support for this bill attests that it also believes this is the optimal way ahead. I commend the Administration for that because this truly must be a bipartisan effort.

Mr. Speaker, the Congress must do its duty and act now to protect Americans and to enhance our economic prosperity. Let us act now to pass the Export Administration Act of 2001.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT  
AUTHORIZING CONGRESS TO  
PROHIBIT PHYSICAL DESECRATION  
OF THE FLAG OF THE  
UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEVE LARGENT**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 17, 2001*

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 36, which would grant Congress the power to add an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting the physical desecration of the United States flag. This resolution will preserve the honor and respect due to our national flag.

When I reflect on the men and women who fought and died to protect the flag as a symbol of democracy and freedom, it amazes me that any American would purposely want to destroy that symbol. I believe that most Americans feel a sense of outrage at the sight of the flag being burned or desecrated by protesters trumpeting freedom of speech as their shield for such a heinous act.

In recent history, our flag has lost the protection it deserves. I've noticed a sad pattern developing that we would even permit our flag to be desecrated. When we allow our nation's honor to be disgraced, should we be surprised that we have traitors in our midst? We allow the symbol of all that is good and pure about our country to be defiled and then we are shocked when our leaders are devoid of the values we cherish.

It is time to restore our flag to its rightful place under the law so that our children and our grandchildren will never be confused about its meaning, its value, or the price paid to preserve it.

A great author once wrote: "You cannot truly love a thing without wanting to fight for it." I love the United States and I want to fight for the hope and freedom it represents to the world. That fight will include protecting our nation's flag.

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK KURTZ

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 18, 2001*

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to your attention the outstanding career of Chuck Kurtz, who on July 20th concludes a distinguished 33-year career with The Olathe Daily News, which serves my congressional district. Chuck started with The Daily News as a photographer, and later moved to sports writer, sports editor, features editor, seniors editor, and concluded his career as managing editor.

At a retirement party that will be held at The Daily News' office on this Friday, the following letter will be presented to Chuck on my behalf; I am pleased to have this opportunity to share this correspondence with my colleagues:

DEAR CHUCK, I want to add my voice to the chorus of those who are praising you on the occasion of your "retirement."

I'm using the term "retirement" loosely, because I think we all know that though you may enjoy a few weeks of fishing or travel, you will soon return to making a positive impact upon the lives of those around you—just as you have done for so many years at The Daily News.

I have enjoyed working with you over the years, first as Johnson County District Attorney, and now as a Member of Congress. Needless to say, we have often found ourselves on opposite sides of the issues. You wouldn't be the Chuck Kurtz I know if we would have agreed on everything!

But no matter the issue or whether or not we agreed, you always understood that there were at least two sides to every story, and that there may be good reasons for individuals to believe and act as they do. I have seen this not only in your writing, but also in your factions—you listen, ask questions, provide different points of view, and have always given me an opportunity to make my case. I appreciate the fact that, if you disagree, you do so in a reasonable and civil way, and do your best to reflect every side of the issue for the benefit of your readers.

You have not only brought a sense of civility to your profession, but you have also brought something of which those in my line of work are often in need—common sense. This is why I will miss you most, and why I think the readers of The Daily News will, also.

Common sense says you shouldn't forget why you do what you do, and you never have. One can tell you are a journalist because you want the public to have the facts they need to make good decisions about their collective future, both locally and nationally. There is honor in this, and I know from firsthand experience that you have had great—and altogether positive—influence on the direction our community has taken. Thank you for your service.

Again, congratulations on your "retirement," and I am looking forward to running into you again soon.

Very truly yours,

DENNIS MOORE,  
Member of Congress.

DOGS OF WAR BARE THEIR TEETH  
OVER COLOMBIA

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 18, 2001*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to offer for the RECORD an op-ed piece written by Ms. Arianna Huffington that appeared in the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday, July 17, 2001. This article regards our country's involvement in Plan Colombia. Before we begin debate on the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, I think it is important that the Congress and the people of the United States reconsider our current policy toward our southern neighbor and third most populous country in South America.

DOGS OF WAR BARE THEIR TEETH OVER  
COLOMBIA

For more than a year, critics of our government's drug-war aid package to Colombia (now hovering at \$2 billion) have been warning of the mission creep that threatens to embed us ever deeper in that country's 4-decades-old civil war.

Well, the slippery slope just got greased.

The House of Representatives is about to vote on the \$15.2-billion foreign operations spending bill. Buried amid the appropriations for many worthwhile projects such as the Peace Corps and international HIV/AIDS relief is a legislative land mine. It comes in the form of a couple of innocuous-sounding lines that could lead to a massive escalation of U.S. involvement in Colombia's unwinnable war.

Contained in the section of the bill earmarking \$676 million for "counterdrug activities" in the region are the following eye-glazing provisions: "These funds are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes and are available without regard to section 3204(b)(1)(B) of Public Law 106-246. Provided further, that section 482(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 shall not apply to funds appropriated under this heading."

Got that? I didn't think so.

Legislative gobbledegook does not get any gookier. but once the meaningless numbers and letters are decoded, and the statutory dots connected, the ominous significance of those provisions becomes all too clear. If approved, they make possible the unlimited buildup of "mercenaries" and the removal of any constraints on the kinds of weapons they can use.

Under current law, the number of U.S. military personnel that can be deployed in Colombia is limited to 500, and they are prohibited from engaging in combat. But as politicians discovered long ago, there are two parts to every law: the spirit of the law and the letter of the law.

As regard Colombia, our government chose the latter, carrying out a classic end-run around the prohibition by funding a war conducted by mercenaries—hundreds of U.S. citizens working for private military contractors like DynCorp, Airscan and Military Professional Resources Inc.

At the moment, the number of these mercenaries is capped at 300. But the first new provision, if it becomes law, does away with this restriction. The other provision removes language that says "weapons or ammunition" while engaged in narcotics-related activities. It's a deadly cocktail: unlimited private forces armed with unlimited weapons.