

no inflation. What is happening here? Banks are raking in good money off of our people, and though there is no inflation on the horizon, we see that our Nation is raising interest rates to attract money from other places because our money is not worth as much.

In fact, we are now, the United States of America, the largest debtor nation in the world, and through NAFTA, we linked ourselves to Mexico and Canada, and North America is now the largest debtor continent on the face of the planet.

And the markets know it. For 15 years our country has been importing vast amounts of merchandise, more than we exported. In fact, last year, 1994, we had the largest merchandise trade deficit in the history of our country; as Congressman DEFAZIO referenced, over \$166 billion more of goods coming in here than we sent out.

In effect, what we have, we have a decapitalization of the United States of America; production that used to be done here is being done somewhere else. We are importing all this stuff and then we have to pay for it with borrowed money. Doesn't sound like a very smart policy to me.

Last year, our deficit with Japan went up even more, to over \$65 billion. Our deficit with China went up to nearly \$30 billion, and the former surplus that we had had before NAFTA with Mexico dried up and went into the negative numbers in October and November of last year, and with the incredible devaluation of the peso, it is estimated that this year of 1995, the United States will yield nearly \$15 billion more of trade deficit in the red with Mexico.

In other words, Mexico will be sending more goods to this country than we will be sending down there. That is not how NAFTA was supposed to work. It is clear that since the middle of February, and like Mr. DEFAZIO, I have a chart that shows the value of the U.S. dollar going down. Since the mid-1980's until the most recent period here after the Mexican peso was devalued, to which we have not linked ourselves inseparably, the value of our dollar has dropped at the fastest rate in the history of our country, and like Mr. DEFAZIO, I am shocked there are no emergency hearings in the Congress. There is no word from the White House. At least the newspapers are reporting, and it has been in top headlines in USA Today, in the New York Times, in the Wall Street Journal. You think Washington fell comatose on this one.

There is a major economic crisis brewing, and money is flowing out of our Treasury to try to prop up the Mexican peso, a few billion dollars. Actually there is more money that has flowed out of the Treasury to prop up the Mexican peso than money has flowed out of the Treasury to prop up the United States' dollar in international markets, we learned this morning. What happened today? Peso

went down again in terms of its own value.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. VUCANOVICH). The Chair is constrained not to entertain such a request during the 5-minute period. The Chair is advised that the 1-minute extension that was allowed the gentleman from Alabama earlier this evening was a parliamentary error.

Ms. KAPTUR. Oh, was an error. All right.

Madam Speaker, let me just say in closing, is not it time someone in this House rang the alarm bell to say enough is enough, and I call on Speaker GINGRICH to allow our bills to move to the floor to stop the further outflow of taxpayer dollars to Mexico.

AMERICAN POLICY ON CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, earlier today, we were privileged to have had the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Miami, Agustin Roman, deliver the opening invocation. In addition to being a model human being and a great role model for our south Florida community, Bishop Roman is one of the many victims of the Castro regime.

You see, the bishop, who is a native of Cuba, was expelled from his own country in 1961 after armed militia men entered his church and at gunpoint led Bishop Roman and 132 other priests out of the country. Since then, the bishop has made it his personal mission to diffuse God's word around the world and to bring liberty and democracy to Cuba.

Of Course, Bishop Roman was not the first nor the last victim of the tyrant who has ruled Cuba for 36 years. As we saw in this summer's rafter exodus, millions of Cubans still linger in the misery and oppression which Fidel Castro and his band of goons have imposed on the island.

Most of these Cubans have fled the island this summer and risked their lives in hopes of reaching the shores of freedom, and they remain today detained like common criminals behind the barbed wire of their Guantanamo Base refugee camps.

This policy by the Clinton administration has been a very unfortunate shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba, which previously gave the oppressed Cuban people the opportunity to begin a new and productive life in the United States, and at the onset of this policy the President promised tougher sanctions against Castro. But as today's front page story in the Washington Post reports, advisers to the President are considering proposing a plan to the President which calls for the easing of sanctions against Cuba and which promises Castro to consider further re-

laxation of the embargo if Castro makes what they consider to be a positive move toward democracy.

Madam Speaker, this is the height of naivete and an utter denial of the reality of the way that Castro operates. For 36 years, the United States has been waiting for concessions from Castro and we have gotten none. In the 1960's, all we got were screams of "paredon, paredon," announcing the execution of yet another Cuban. In the 1970's, we got the exportation of revolution, not only to Latin America, but also to Africa, where thousands of young Cubans were sent to their deaths in the name of the revolution.

And in the 1980's, we got rectification and a special period of peace, which squeezed the Cuban people to mere subsistence.

Today, we get word of reforms, cosmetic reforms, which are just a mask of the sad reality, the utter failure of Castro and of his Communist revolution.

However, through all these decades, one element of the Cuban regime has remained intact, the absolute control of Castro over the island of Cuba and the denial of political and civil rights to the Cuban people.

Unbelievably and apparently, some within the Clinton administration still believe that Castro can reform and that it is somehow the fault of the United States that Castro has remained unwilling to change.

Just today, at an International Relations hearing, I was once again surprised by a member of the administration on the policy toward Cuba. On a hearing on the Mexico bailout plan, a state official made the incredible statement that Mexico does not "provide assistance to the government of Cuba."

This is a disingenuous statement, considering that Mexico is one of the leading investment countries in Cuba and that the Mexican Government actively encourages Mexican investors to invest in the island. Thus Mexico, through its policy of investment promotion in Cuba, directly encourages the subsidizing of the repression of the Cuban people. Leave it to the Clinton administration officials to once again ignore the obvious.

Furthermore, we have still not heard a word from the President on the recently introduced Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act introduced by Senator JESSE HELMS and Congressman DAN BURTON, and this bipartisan legislation is a joint effort by Democrats and Republicans to tighten the Cuban embargo against Castro. However, as of today, the President has remained silent.

Madam Speaker, on a recent trip to Guantanamo, led by a very knowledgeable chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Congressman DAN BURTON, as well as with Congressmen LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, BOB MENENDEZ, MARK SANFORD, VIC FRAZER, and JOHN MICA, we were able to once again visit with the victims of the

Castro revolution, the sons and daughters of the revolution as Castro has called them, and they are now his main adversaries.

Madam Speaker, I call on the President to understand that dialogue and concessions are not the answer. Tougher sanctions are, and that is where U.S. policy should be directed.

The stronger religion grows, the harder it may be for Castro to keep his monopoly on power.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GUTIERREZ addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

AMERICAN POLICY ON CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, back in December, my office began to get reports from within the Clinton administration that advisers, foreign policy advisers to the President, were advising him to send a gesture of friendship to Castro. After I got the third report from within the administration that foreign policy advisers to the President were pressuring the President to do that, to send a gesture of friendship to Castro, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and I sent a letter to the President, where we expressed our deep concern about those reports, and I have got that letter here and I would like to read it if I can.

"Mr. President"—this was back in December—

We have received deeply disturbing reports from within your administration concerning efforts by Mr. Morton Halperin to achieve the implementation of a policy initiative by the White House that would benefit the Cuban communist dictatorship.

These reports are made even more alarming by the fact that Mr. Halperin is the member of your National Security Council staff, whose nomination to a sensitive Department of Defense position had to be withdrawn when the Democratic-controlled Senate would not confirm him. Throughout his career, Mr. Halperin has shown faulty judgment in relation to threats emanating from Castro's Cuba. After Castro's incursions into Angola and Ethiopia, for example, Mr. Halperin inaccurately wrote that "every action which the Soviet Union and Cuba have taken in Africa has been consistent with the principles of international law. The Cubans have come in only when invited by a government and have remained only at their request."

"As you know, Mr. President"—we continue in the letter, in December—

On August 5th of this year, approximately 30,000 Cubans spontaneously took to the streets in Havana demanding freedom. Despite a terrible crackdown by the regime, Cubans throughout the island are demanding democracy in ever-bolder forms of action.

Sugar production and Castro's ability to purchase oil are at an all time low, the sanctions you implemented last August 20th are having a strong effect, and numerous signs point to the inevitable collapse of the communist tyranny.

Any gesture along the lines being sought by Mr. Halperin at this time, such as authorizing U.S. business to engage in the unrestricted sale and financing of medicine, medical supplies, medical equipment or food to Castro; lifting your August 20th sanctions, banning charter flights and remittances; allowing financial transactions or travel for so-called academic, cultural and scientific exchange, public exhibitions or performances or activities of alleged religious organizations; loosening travel restrictions to allow unrestricted travel by U.S. citizens or allowing business or tourist travel; allowing the establishment of U.S. news bureaus in Cuba or Cuban news bureaus in the United States; or ceasing to regulate financial transactions related to the establishment of news bureaus in communist Cuba; entering into so-called negotiations with the government to settle U.S. property claims or any other friendly gesture toward Castro at this time of almost unprecedented repression would constitute a form of the complicity with the ferocious oppression of the Cuban communist dictatorship against its people.

We hope that you will remain firm in the enforcement of our sanctions against the Cuban dictatorship by resisting the pressures of those who would throw in the moribund Cuban totalitarian regime.

He very courteously answers in January, stating, "I assure you that our Cuban policy will remain focused on bringing about a peaceful transition to a democratic regime and will be guided by the Cuban Democracy Act." Basically, he goes on saying that we won't be pressured. Then he says, please be—"Please be assured as well that I have confidence in the advice that I am being given on Cuba. That advice has and will continue to reflect the administration policy and the principles of the Cuban Democracy Act. I look forward to working with Congress in pursuit of our common objective of a free and Democratic Cuba."

Now, today the Washington Post on the front page has an article, Clinton may ease sanctions on Cuba. Talk about a direct leak. President Clinton's foreign policy advisers are recommending, this is not—we hear it is possible, there are reports, no, beginning of the article, front page of the Washington Post, President Clinton's foreign policy advisers are recommending he take steps towards easing relations from Cuba by revoking some economic sanctions adopted against the Nation in August, administration's officials said yesterday.

□ 2015

This is the Washington Post today. So how does one reconcile the letter from the President, where he says, I am not yielding to pressure, we are going to maintain our sanctions, please be assured that I have confidence in the advice I am getting, and this article.

We need to continue talking about this. This is very serious, very serious. This is not the time to throw a lifeline

to Castro. It is the time to go the other direction and to help Cuban people to gain their freedom.

THE DAVIS-BACON ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, Republicans in Congress have begun their assault on one of the most important workers' rights acts of the 20th century, the Davis-Bacon Act. This important law protects the American standard of living by ensuring that workers on federally-funded construction projects are paid at the wage rates that prevail in their communities. To repeal the Davis-Bacon Act would be a slap in the face to the American worker.

The Davis-Bacon Act was passed in 1931 and signed by a Republican President. It was the first Federal wage law to provide prevailing wage protection to nongovernment workers.

Now, Republicans in Congress are threatening to repeal this historic legislation. At a time when the number one concern of middle-class working families is a declining standard of living, repealing the Davis-Bacon Act would be devastating. The very heart of this law is protecting the American standard of living.

But you do not have to take my word for it. Just look at what has happened in States that have present repealed prevailing wage laws. Economists at the University of Utah have written a comprehensive study of the effects of repealing prevailing wage laws in nine States during the 1980's.

The University of Utah study found that the repeal of prevailing wage laws had a destructive economic impact. From their analysis of these repeal States, authors of the report project that the Federal Davis-Bacon Act would hurt the national economy in the following ways:

Federal income tax collections would fall by \$1 billion per year because of the decline in construction earnings. As a result, the Federal deficit would dramatically increase.

Each construction worker would see his or her annual earnings fall by \$1,477. The total national loss due to this reduction in construction earnings would be \$4.6 billion each year.

A massive increase in cost overruns and use of expensive change orders. In the case of Utah, which repealed its State prevailing wage law in 1981, cost overruns on State financed roads tripled over the next decade due to the low-ball bidding practices. The lack of a prevailing wage will encourage similar overruns at the national level.

Prevailing wage laws were designed to achieve a simple goal: to prevent government from using its purchasing power to undermine the wages of workers. It is a law that works. It works for