

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for 4 minutes.

WHAT IS THE WTO?

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, with all the talk about the meeting of the WTO in Seattle, it is worth answering the question, what is the WTO? The World Trade Organization, the Uruguay Round of the GATT, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, is a broad-ranging set of international trade rules that, number one, imposes obligations on foreign countries that are beneficial to U.S. multinational companies and, number two, it imposes obligations on the Federal and State governments that place tight limitations on Congress and the State legislatures that are beneficial to foreign multinational companies.

The WTO makes the world the oyster of large multinational businesses, because the WTO takes away the inability of national governments to set the laws of their countries. National governments, including the United States, lose the ability to pass laws affecting the import of products that are dangerous or that are made where there are no worker protections, child labor prohibitions, minimum wage standards or where workers are deprived of the right to organize into unions and bargain collectively.

Even if the import of those products would put U.S. workers out of work or would endanger consumers or the environment, the WTO says no.

At the current time, there is a WTO panel hearing arguments against France's ban on asbestos, a proven carcinogen in humans and a substantial workplace danger.

According to the Congressional Research Service, legislation passed in the U.S. Congress to ban imports of products made with child labor, quote, would be inconsistent with GATT articles, unquote. In other words, the WTO would not permit Congress to ban products made with child labor.

So here is the imbalance: The WTO permits measures that make it easier for large companies to locate anywhere in the world but the WTO forbids a country from banning a product made with child labor.

What would happen if the U.S. passed a law that banned the import of products made with child labor? Any one of the 131 member countries could seek a

tribunal in Geneva to overturn the U.S. law. Companies that profit from products made from child labor would be expected to lobby countries to bring such a case. It is possible that companies would be able to bring such a case themselves, without persuading a country government to do so, if the WTO is expanded some more. If a WTO panel of trade bureaucrats ruled that any child labor ban violated the WTO, the U.S. would have to repeal the law or pay damages.

According to the Congressional Research Service, that is just what the WTO tribunal would rule.

So when the World Trade agreement was negotiated, we gave away the United States' greatest negotiating leverage, access to the U.S. market, to improve the rights and living standards of workers in the U.S. and around the world. The U.S. has basically unilaterally ceded this.

In the next few weeks, trade ministers from many of the world's countries will be meeting in Seattle to discuss how to expand the WTO. The U.S. is sending many negotiators, but will they be bargaining for what we need? What we need, what the working people in the United States and overseas need, is to renegotiate the WTO before any expansion occurs. We need to place limitations on the WTO. We need to explicitly enable the United States and other countries to prohibit import of products made with child and forced labor.

We need to be able to use the leverage of access to the U.S. market and other markets to guarantee the rights of workers to organize into unions and bargain collectively; to be protected by workplace safety and right-to-know standards that are minimally equivalent to current U.S. standards; and to benefit from legal minimum wage levels.

We need the WTO to be limited to improve conditions for workers in the U.S. and around the world. American workers would benefit. They would have less reason to be pressured into abandoning efforts to improve wages and conditions by employer threats to move plants and equipment to the Third World.

SELLING ABORTED BABY PARTS, WHAT HAS THE UNITED STATES COME TO?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 350, a resolution which addresses the horrible practice developing in America of trafficking in baby body parts for monetary reimbursement. Abortion clinics are selling dead, unborn babies, or parts of them, to middlemen. These middlemen, in turn, are selling them to researchers.

Mr. Speaker, just look at this blowup of this price list taken from this chilling magazine article from someone in this awful business. A liver, \$150, but it can be gotten for \$125 if it is from a younger baby, or one can get a 30 percent discount if it is significantly fragmented; a spleen, \$75; pancreas, \$100; a thymus, \$100.

Look at this, a brain, \$999. Notice they even use marketing techniques in this gruesome business, selling it for \$1 less than a thousand dollars to make it, I guess, a more attractive purchase.

Again, if it is fragmented, what a terrible way to describe a baby's injured brain from abortion, one can get a 30 percent discount; almost like step right up, ladies and gentlemen. A baby's ear, \$75; eyes, \$75 for a pair, \$40 for one; skin, \$100; the spinal cord, \$325.

Mr. Speaker, I wish this price list were a cruel Halloween hoax, but it is not. It is a price list for human body parts from aborted babies, in America. This is not Nazi, Germany.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution calling for oversight hearings.

THE WTO NEEDS A MAJOR OVERHAUL, AND THE UNITED STATES HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), who preceded me, talked a little bit about the upcoming meeting of the World Trade Organization, and I would like to follow up on that.

It was Renato Ruggiero, the former director general of the World Trade Organization, who said, and I quote, we are writing the Constitution of a new world government, end quote.

Well, they left out a few things when they wrote that new constitution. They left out consumer rights and protections. They left out labor rights. They left out environmental rights and protections.

The United States has a tremendous opportunity, in hosting the beginning of the next round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization, to initiate a major overhaul of this horribly flawed agreement and drag it kicking and screaming into at least the late 20th Century.

Labor rights, well there seems to be agreement on labor rights. The President has admitted that perhaps the nonbinding, face-saving, political butt-covering side agreements on labor and the environment, which were not binding, which helped push NAFTA through this organization here, the House of Representatives, gave enough political cover, will not be enough in the future for trade agreements and, if called, he and the vice president, for labor agreements to be core labor protections, to be core to any future

agreement, the only problem is, their employee, the special trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky, does not seem to share their views.

When pressed in a press conference last week to expand upon what is the United States talking about here, they cannot be serious about putting labor protections into an international trade agreement, by God, then what would capital do? How could it run around the world looking for the most exploited sources of labor?

She said, quote, this is not a negotiating group. It is an analytic working group designed to draw upon the expertise of other multilateral institutions in order to answer a series of analytic points.

Now, that does not sound an awful lot like labor protections. It does not sound like it will get us to the point made by the previous gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), stopping trafficking in goods produced by forced child labor around the world. No, that is a little too far for the World Trade Organization, and if Ms. Barshefsky has her way, it will be too far for the United States of America to go. That is pathetic.

She goes on to say, the issue of sanctions is nowhere in this proposal and it is certainly not on the table, and then she goes on in another much longer quote I do not have time to give, to say that this analytical look at labor protections will lead everybody to the conclusion that the best way to bring up labor standards around the world is not to have any; sort of like the theory of the Republicans here in Congress. If we did not have a minimum wage the market would set one and it would be good for everybody.

Well, maybe not the people who earn the minimum wage or just above it, but it would be good for the employers.

The same thing with the World Trade Organization and Charlene Barshefsky. They want to say the market will bring about in the future some sort of labor protections without these horrible dictates.

In fact, they are undermining our own laws here in the United States with the World Trade Organization, a little secretive body of 3 people who are exempt from conflict of interest, exempt from public disclosure, make binding decisions on trade disputes.

The U.S. has lost a number of trade disputes on environmental issues over the last few years, but they have won one big one.

We are going to force the Europeans to take hormone-laced beef. By God, that is a big victory for the U.S. and we should have more of this. We do not want to reform this organization. We do not want transparency and doing away with conflict of interest rules. We do not want any system of juris prudence the American people can understand. We do not want to allow environmental groups or labor groups to intervene and mess up the decision-making process of the World Trade Organization.

We have a tremendous opportunity as the United States of America to lead, and maybe we have to get rid of Ms. Barshefsky to do that.

QUINCY LIBRARY GROUP AND FOREST HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, we have a forest health crisis in this country and the Clinton-Gore administration's current do-nothing policies are utterly failing to address it. A government report released in April states that approximately 39 million acres of our western national forests are at extremely high risk of catastrophic fire.

Alarmingly, this same report indicates that the Forest Service has failed to advance a cohesive strategy to treat this 39 million acres at risk, despite the fact that the window of opportunity for taking effective management action is only about 10 to 25 years before catastrophic wild fires become widespread.

Last year, Congress passed historic legislation that was intended to provide the Forest Service a tool with which to proactively address and combat this forest health crisis.

The bipartisan Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act, which passed last Congress by an overwhelming margin of 429-to-1, mandated a project to manage our forests for health and safety, while providing for a responsible, ecologically sound level of harvesting to benefit local economies.

The Forest Service was assigned the responsibility of carrying out this specific plan, but made several last minute additions to the environmental analysis that have drastically tilted the bipartisan balance that this Congress struck in the law and the Quincy Group struck in its plan.

These changes, based on a combination of bad science and special interest politics, will prevent treatment on almost all of the 2½ million acres to be protected from catastrophic fire under the original plan. The decision was made behind closed doors, without public input.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Service has taken it upon itself to circumvent a law that this Congress passed almost unanimously. The Quincy plan presented us with an opportunity to proactively prevent the very type of catastrophic forest and wildland fires that have ripped through 5 counties in my district in Northern California in the past 8 weeks, tragically taking two human lives.

These fires have also burned more than 250,000 acres of public and private property, destroyed more than 100 homes, eliminated thousands of acres of wildlife habitat and various species

of wildlife, and generated tons of smoke. In addition, the American taxpayers have paid close to \$100 million to fight these fires.

However, the Forest Service has rejected this plan and has scaled it back to the point that it is almost meaningless, perhaps hoping the fire risks will somehow go away, despite the fact that the risk of catastrophic fire across the West is increasing.

The agency proposes to lock up our choked, fire-prone forests and allow prescribed fires to achieve its so-called forest management goals, even though this policy causes serious air pollution and poses a very real risk that a burn will get out of control, as it has on a number of occasions.

To add to this outrage, Mr. Speaker, the administration recently proposed to lock up an additional 40 to 50 million more acres of national forests, preventing the very management strategies that our fire experts are telling us we absolutely must take.

This attempt to shut down access to the public's forest lands is too much about what special interest groups demand and too little of what their own elected government and science recommends.

This Clinton-Gore administration has needlessly put our lives and property at risk in a selfish attempt to create an environmental legacy. The reality of our forest health crisis is that more, not less, of our forests must be available for pursuing forest management strategies.

We must begin to take proactive steps before catastrophic fires become more widespread. The forest service and this administration have refused to respond and have neglected congressional attempts to address the crisis. They appear ready to serve special interest environmental politics until well after the election.

Regrettably, forest fires are not that patient.

Mr. Speaker, our forests and our communities are at risk and we intend to do everything possible to hold this administration accountable for its negligence.

A LIVABLE COMMUNITY IS ONE WHERE FAMILIES ARE SAFE, HEALTHY AND ECONOMICALLY SECURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, a livable community is one where families are safe, healthy and economically secure. While much attention is given to the damage that unplanned growth can have to the physical environment, the physical blight, traffic congestion, loss of open space, wildlife habitat, it is clear that a community that is not livable can also have direct impacts on