

DOMESTIC STEEL INDUSTRY IN
CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in recent years the United States has become the world's largest steel dumping ground at the expense of U.S. jobs, U.S. families, the U.S. economy, and maybe U.S. national security. It is a fact. This fact must be addressed now.

As a Nation, we import more than twice as much steel than we did in 1991 and we do so at prices significantly lower than those in 1998. This surge in illegally dumped steel has been devastating to the domestic steel industry. In the last 4 years, 26 steel companies have filed for bankruptcy; seventeen have filed for bankruptcy protection in the last year alone. This list includes three companies in northeast Ohio: RTI of Lorain; LTV Steel of Cleveland; and CSC Steel in Warren.

I recently joined civic leaders, company executives, and steelworkers at a public rally for Lorain's RTI, a steel manufacturer that employs 1,500 people in my district. At the rally, I cited the President's decision to impose a section 201 steel tariff as one of the primary reasons that I was optimistic. But at the same time we were rallying in support of RTI, the President's Treasury Secretary was telling European leaders that he expected a large proportion of the tariff exemption applications filed with the United States to be decided upon favorably by the United States. As a representative of a steel-producing State that has suffered severe hardship due to illegal steel dumping, I was disturbed to hear the President's Treasury Secretary make comments shifting the administration away from its own recently imposed 30 percent tariff on imported steel. These statements have continued to be a source of great concern to those of us in Congress who had assumed, I hope not wrongly, that the Bush administration was committed to enforcing its own tariffs on illegally dumped steel.

One can imagine the confusion these statements have caused the tens of thousands of already anxious steelworkers. The President's remedy excludes steel coming from Korea and Australia. The tariff remedy also excludes steel from our NAFTA partners, Canada and Mexico, which opens up the very real possibility of the illegal transshipment from Asian countries or somewhere else through Mexico or Canada. A Mexican steel company, for example, could easily have foreign steel shipped to a plant in Mexico, where they then could redirect it to the United States with little or no direct value added.

Administration trade officials have argued that there are appropriate controls in place to prevent this transshipment of foreign steel, but there are also controls in place to prevent the

transshipment of other items and the transshipment of illegal narcotics through Mexico, and to prevent the importation of unsafe foods. The sad truth is the Federal Government, because of Republican budget cuts, inspects only 1 percent of all the imports, food and any other kinds of steel imports and anything else, only 1 percent of the imports that cross the U.S.-Mexican border. Our border agents simply do not have the resources necessary to prevent illegally transshipped steel from entering our country.

The current tariff remedy has already been diluted by the Bush administration. The holes in this steel tariff that President Bush himself created severely weaken our safeguards against illegal dumping. During an October visit in 2000 to Weirton, West Virginia, then Vice Presidential Candidate DICK CHENEY criticized the Clinton administration's handling of the steel issue. He pledged that a Bush administration would take action on the steel crisis, and he told steelworkers, "We will never lie to you. If our trading partners violate trade laws, we will respond swiftly and firmly."

The steel industry needs the administration to follow through on that promise. The domestic survival of this industry absolutely depends on it. The survival of this industry is not just an economic issue. It is also an issue of national security. We must protect the 700,000 hard-working families who rely on this industry for their salaries, for their pensions, and for their health benefits. We also must ensure that we retain the ability in terms of national defense to manufacture steel for planes and weapons and ships.

In addition to strict enforcement of the Bush tariff, the Republican leadership in the House should respond to public demand, should respond to a majority of Members on both sides of the aisle, and bring the Steel Revitalization Act to the House floor. In the future, Congress and the President must respond to the public's demand for U.S. trade policies that actually support American workers. If the President is sincere about helping the steel industry, he will not allow these exemptions suggested by his own Treasury Secretary. He will not allow these inappropriate exemptions to erode the effectiveness of his tariffs. He will not back away from these measures before they have been given a chance to work.

To give concerned Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker, and employees of the steel industry confidence, I urge President Bush to publicly affirm his support for his own administration's steel tariffs.

ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS
LOWER PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the leadership is currently considering a proposal to change the definition of debt subject to the debt limit. This proposal would create a new lower limit applying only to debt held by the public. This would exclude debt owed to government trust funds, principally the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. As chairman of the Speaker's debt limit task force in 1995 and 1996, I oppose this proposal.

Ending the inclusion of debt held by government trust funds, what the general fund has borrowed from Social Security and Medicare, in the statutory debt limit is unwise for good fiscal reasons. I think that the proposal of creating two classes of debt will create opportunities for the manipulation of government accounts to disguise the true level of debt.

This concern is not wholly theoretical. The Treasury has used some accounting gimmicks available in the past. As my debt limit task force report documented, the Treasury divested \$39.8 billion from the civil service trust fund in November of 1995 to avoid bumping up against the statutory debt limit. Though the divestment was reversed after an increase in the debt limit, it put the retirement benefits of millions of government employees at risk while masking the true size of government obligations. If we change the debt ceiling to apply only to Wall Street debt, the same thing could happen to Social Security and Medicare.

The truth is, however, that there are only a limited number of opportunities for this sort of finagling under current law. Creating a broad class of accounts outside of the debt limit will increase the danger of this sort of manipulation exponentially. Further, it will complicate government accounting and make it even more difficult to understand the government's true financial situation.

I have another concern as well. Taking government-held securities out of the debt limits comes close to saying that our debts to bondholders on Wall Street are more important, or more real, than our debts to the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. The change could be portrayed as discounting our obligations to Social Security and Medicare while protecting Wall Street bondholders. It would be, in fact, a denial of the fiscal mess we are in with our entitlement programs. Not only do we owe that money in the trust funds that some would like to ignore, we have tens of billions of dollars of unfunded liabilities for Social Security and Medicare. We have to face up to this challenge and make some hard decisions. Instead, the proposed debt ceiling change would sweep it under the rug, our future obligations, leaving the problem to our children and grandchildren.

If we are interested in honest accounting and fair depiction of our government finances, we would increase

the debt ceiling dramatically to account for these unfunded liabilities, what we have promised in Social Security and Medicare which are going to be future debt and future cost, and we would account for these in addition to what we have borrowed from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds as well as the so-called Wall Street debt.

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Perhaps raising the debt ceiling would wake up those in Congress who hope the obligations of the entitlement program will simply go away or simply be dealt with with future Congresses, because it is politically difficult to acknowledge how and who is going to pay for those future obligations. I would just like to say that Chairman Alan Greenspan suggests that possibly we should have no statutory debt limit, because the true obligation comes from how much Congress spends and legislation we pass promising future benefits or future spending. I disagree.

Though painful, I believe that we should have a full discussion about how much debt, including the unfunded liabilities, our country should leave to future generations, and how this would best meet our country's goals of fiscal discipline and honest government accounting.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLETCHER). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the challenges of this Congress are many, and there are many diverse interests that we have. Representatives of the people's House come from all over the Nation, and clearly they offer to the American people the best opportunity to debate the issues that Americans are concerned about.

One of those that causes a great deal of confusion, of course, is the policies of immigration and the work of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

More than any other time, September 11 helped the issues of immigration to explode on the psyche of Americans. I have constantly said as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Immigration that immigration does not equate to terrorism. So many of us came to this land in many different forms, some voluntarily and some involuntarily.

Mr. Speaker, we have this week the opportunity to address the questions of fixing the Immigration and Naturalization Service agency, to be able to address the concerns not only of Americans, but Members of Congress, who day after day and time after time spend a good 60 percent or more of their office staff time addressing the questions of immigration.

Some would say, here we go again, talking about illegal immigrants and

people coming in to take our jobs. No, immigration deals with individuals who come here to reunite with their family, who come to be a part of this great country, who are law-abiding, tax-paying individuals and families, and they are hard working. Immigrants represent the infrastructure and base of the agricultural industry; and if we talk to those who are in that industry, they will be the biggest champions of those who come to work, but maybe not so much the champions of good working conditions and housing conditions and compensation.

So America has to be honest and true to its values and balance the reunification of families and the fairness of our Nation with the fact that we must have a system that thwarts illegal immigration, but respects and acknowledges access to legalization and family reunification.

This week, we will be dealing with the restructuring of the INS. Some call it the abolishing of the INS. It is a re-vamping and a redoing. It is to set up an agency that can work. We establish, for the first time in history, a Children's Bureau that deals with the many children that come unattended to the United States, who need either an opportunity to be reunited with their families, or to be sent to their homeland.

It provides a real office of student tracking so the tragedies of September 11 with student visas not being appropriately tracked will have at least an office. It gives the position of the Deputy Associate Attorney General, the second-highest-ranking job in the Department of Justice, the responsibility of covering two bureaus, one dealing with those accessing legalization and the other dealing with enforcement. It provides a line of chain of command so that the centers and district offices are coordinated and there is not one hand saying something different from the other hand, that enforcement is not in conflict with services, but that they are coordinated.

Someone said, it is going to be under the Department of Justice and I do not like that. It is under the Department of Justice now. But we are abolishing it in its form so that the administration can change the infrastructure under the umbrella of this new legislation. I would only hope that they will take up the chance and work with Congress. We will be fighting for more resources and professional development training for the employees and the right of these particular leaders of this agency to select new staff, energized staff to be able to work on these issues.

I hope that the op-eds in the editorial pages of America's newspapers will take the time to read and understand legislation as opposed to making blanket comments about what they do not like and do like. All of us have problems with the systems that are broken in the immigration structure, but we cannot have problems with those who come to this land seeking opportunity

and justice. Who are we to say. Each of us, all of us can count an experience of coming to this land of opportunity. No one, except for our native Americans, has any standing to suggest who can come in and who cannot. We must have procedures and laws. We must promote legal immigration and access to legalization, but we must also as a country stand for our values.

Mr. Speaker, we will get that opportunity to debate this important bill on the floor of the House this coming Thursday. It started out as H.R. 1562, which I wrote some years ago; and it is a compromise bill, working together with both sides of the aisle. But I am very proud of the Children's Bureau that has been included and the fact that we now have a structure that allows for a command chain to be in place and to also be able to fix the problems, fix what is broken, and to be able to respect that all of us have walked and all of us have come for freedom and justice and opportunity.

I hope that this does not wallow into the accusations of anti-immigrant policies and debate. I hope that it talks about what this bill is; and it is to fix the system, to protect our borders, to ensure that we have protection for those who come legally and the acknowledgment of those who do not. Then I hope, lastly, that we will bring America together, because that is what this country stands for, unity and an affirmation of our wonderful values.

COMMEMORATION AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues to commemorate tomorrow's eighth annual Capitol Hill observance of the 87th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. I do want to thank my colleagues on the caucus, including the Chairs, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), for their work in organizing the tribute that will take place tomorrow evening. This observance does take place every year on April 24. I hope that my comments a day earlier will attest to my earnestness and passion about the issue.

It was on that date in 1915 that more than 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were arrested in Constantinople and murdered. Over the next 8 years, persecution of Armenians intensified; and by 1923, more than 1.5 million had died and another 500,000 had gone into exile. At the end of 1923, all of the Armenian residents of Anatolia and Western Armenia had been either killed or deported.

The genocide was criticized at the time by our United States Ambassador,