

There is great danger in so elevating the trappings of international consultation and the rituals of multilateralism that they become a surrogate for our true purpose: we have to protect ourselves and the world by disarming Saddam Hussein.

Some observers refuse to acknowledge the grave consequences of allowing Saddam Hussein to remain in power. In the hierarchy of aggressive and military regimes, Saddam's dictatorship is a clear and present danger to the United States. And by providing Saddam added time, added time to supply, train and support terrorist groups, these endless pleas for patience convert a virtue into a vice. Any nation which naively denies the clear threat from Saddam Hussein's regime is placing the free world at jeopardy by ignoring this dictator's infamous past and evil aspirations.

Regardless of what others may say, the final authority governing American action is not the United Nations. It is the Constitution of the United States and the decisions of our own elected government. If and when President Bush decides America must confront Saddam Hussein's regime, he will be exercising his authority as commander in chief and expressing the broad support already demonstrated by Congress through the Iraq Resolution passed months ago.

The Left is attempting to turn us from our purpose with another bit of sophistry. They claim our imperative to confront Saddam Hussein's dictatorship is a diversion from the war against terrorism. Well, far from a diversion, confronting Saddam Hussein is a central and defining measure of our commitment to win the war on terrorism.

If President Bush determines that America must act, he can be confident that the unified support of the American people will be with him until the danger is defeated. The President should know that we stand beside him and that the United States will not shrink from our obligation to defend freedom.

While we seek the broadest possible coalition of freedom-loving countries in this effort, we cannot let a hunt for international consensus divide us and deter us from our purpose. We will not be dissuaded from taking action to defend America.

GUAM REQUESTS ADDITIONAL FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, the people of Guam eagerly anticipate the State of the Union report which President Bush will deliver tonight. While the President will speak in broad terms about the Nation, I take this opportunity to let the Nation know about the situation on my home island of

Guam, which has been recently devastated by Super Typhoon Pongsona.

Super Typhoon Pongsona struck Guam on December 8, 2002, with sustained winds of 155 miles per hour and wind gusts exceeding 200 miles per hour. This severe typhoon battered Guam for 8 long hours; and in its aftermath, Guam's power, water, and wastewater systems were seriously damaged. In addition, Guam had just begun to fully recover from another storm, Typhoon Chata'an, which struck in July 2002, barely 6 months before Typhoon Pongsona.

Our island looked like a war zone. Hotels had their windows blown out and over 120 concrete power poles snapped due to the force of Pongsona. Aluminum typhoon shutters were ripped off the windows; and air conditioners were blown off roof tops and windows, creating holes for rain to destroy the interior of our homes.

Andersen Air Force Base, Naval Station, and Apra Harbor, were hit hard, as well as our own civilian airport, closing both airports and delaying relief flights. Four fuel storage tanks at the Port of Guam caught fire and burned for days, jeopardizing nearby storage tanks filled with aviation fuel, gasoline and diesel fuel. Two tanks were destroyed completely, while two others have been damaged.

Many people on Guam who have lived through other typhoons over the years have remarked that Pongsona was the worst typhoon they had ever experienced in their lives. I was there to witness this.

President Bush declared Guam a major disaster area following Super Typhoon Pongsona, and the FEMA emergency management agency, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Catholic Social Services, and many other volunteers mobilized for the relief and recovery effort. We on Guam are sincerely grateful for all these efforts and for the incredible response of the Guam National Guard, the Government of Guam employees, and the reserve and active duty military units on Guam. There is nothing more humbling to a community than to see the outpouring of assistance to us in our time of desperate need. There is nothing more heroic than to see Guardsmen, government employees, and volunteers leave their own ravaged homes behind and respond to the call of duty.

Seven weeks later, as I speak today, 20 percent of our island is still without power. Power outages plague our community every day. The water system is still not at full capacity, and the government is still coping with the enormous challenges ahead. Governor Felix Camacho and Lieutenant Governor Kaleo Moylan took office on January 6, 2003, facing the daunting task of completing the recovery. The 27th Guam legislature, under the leadership of Speaker Ben Pangelinan also assumed office with these great challenges awaiting them. Our people pray for our

leaders to succeed, because not since the liberation of Guam from its World War II occupation of our island have we faced such difficult times.

We are facing 20 percent unemployment, a bottoming out of our tourist industry, and an expensive recovery that may last the rest of this year. We need the Federal Government to extend whatever help is available, not just to clean up after the typhoon but to help us restore our economy and rebuild our basic infrastructure. We need hazard mitigation assistance to make Guam less vulnerable to the next super typhoon, and we need the prayers and the support of the American people for their fellow American citizens who live on Guam.

We are a community that prides ourselves on our self-reliance and our resilience after any hardship. We have great optimism and great faith in our future. We need a hand right now, and we ask that President Bush and the Congress take just a minute as we reflect on the blessing and opportunities of our great country to remember that some Americans are facing great hardships tonight. Please remember Guam.

AGRICULTURE DISASTER IN NORTH CAROLINA

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues of the sad state of agriculture in my home State of North Carolina. And, indeed, farmers across the Nation took a big hit in their wallets thanks to Mother Nature last year.

As Congress prepares to receive the President's State of the Union address, we must pay special attention to those folks who are hurting down on the farm. At one time last summer, according to the National Drought Mitigation Center, nearly one-third of the United States experienced moderate to extreme drought conditions. The prolonged period of dry weather severely aggravated North Carolina's long-term drought problems.

Consequently, my State experienced the worst drought we have seen in 100 years. This drought impacted every region of North Carolina and nearly every community where commodities are grown. Many farmers had to watch crops wither on the vine and die despite their best efforts. And when rain finally came, it came too late to save what was already lost and impaired their ability to harvest what little they had.

In North Carolina, farmers have experienced \$400 million in crop losses. While crop insurance has paid out \$90 million in indemnities, which helped, it comes at a cost of \$63 million in premiums. So crop insurance has not been a viable solution to losses of this magnitude.

The Secretary of Agriculture designated nearly the entire State of

North Carolina as a disaster area, making low-interest loans available to our farmers. USDA also provided for emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program lands, something our livestock producers appreciated. While this assistance is welcome, it does not come even close to meeting the losses that our farmers have suffered.

In addition, many farmers cannot afford to increase their debt burden with new loans. Farmers need more help than just new credit and comforting words; they need direct disaster payments, and they need them now so they can start a new crop year.

For several months we have been pushing for more agriculture disaster relief, along with a bipartisan group of lawmakers representing States that were affected by the drought last summer. We were extremely hopeful last year when the United States Senate voted in favor of a disaster package as part of the 2003 interior appropriations bill. Their plan would provide almost \$6 billion in assistance for our farmers.

In fact, I cosponsored a bill here in the House introduced by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) which matched the Senate's disaster bill. Unfortunately, the administration opposed these agriculture disaster plans. Instead, the President demanded that any disaster assistance be paid for by cutting the farm bill that we passed last year.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a proud bipartisan tradition of coming to the aid of States when they have been struck by natural calamities. When tragedy strikes, we do not let States fend for themselves; we instead respond as one Nation. Whether it is an earthquake in California, wildfires in the Rockies, floods in the Midwest, or hurricanes in Florida, Congress worries more about how best to help these people who have suffered and less about how we pay for it at the moment. The drought which affected my State and much of the West and East Coast deserves the same level of treatment by Congress as these other disasters.

In fact, historically, drought is one of the most costly natural disasters that have struck any region of this country. I call upon this House to show this administration that we understand what is really going on in the farm country and that we are prepared to come to their assistance in their time of need.

As my colleagues know, the Senate included in the 2003 omnibus appropriations bill \$3.1 billion for disaster assistance. Consequently, at the administration's insistence, the Senate was forced to cut education, veterans benefits, and a number of FBI agents. Now, I do not understand this. The President is proposing deficit funding for his massive \$674 billion tax plan, which will do nothing to help the economy and middle-class Americans. However, when we ask for his support for emergency spending for just 1 percent, \$6 billion, to help farmers who suffered from an

act of God and who could lose their entire livelihood, the President says no.

I urge the conference committee to reject these cuts, continue our bipartisan tradition and fully fund agriculture disaster relief as we have done in the past. The Nation's farmers are waiting and watching. Let us not disappoint them.

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PRESIDENTIAL CREDIBILITY GAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, we all know that tonight the President will deliver his State of the Union Address, and that is often and is supposed to be an opportunity to reflect upon the state of the Nation, the economy, foreign policy, the potential war, and health care, which are just some of the issues that we expect the President to address this evening.

My concern, and I have shared this concern with many of my Democratic colleagues, is that the President constantly comes forward and talks about what he is going to do to address the Nation's problems, to deal with the economy, for example, to deal with health care, for example, but many times those promises are not kept in terms of what action he actually follows up with to meet the commitments that he makes.

I call it a credibility gap. Some of my colleagues on the Democratic side have taken notice of this credibility gap over the last 2 days; and I wanted to particularly mention that today because when I opened the New York Times this morning, I saw a column by Paul Krugman where he actually references a credibility problem with the President, and he talks about it in the context of not only tonight's State of the Union Address, but also in comparison to last year's State of the Union Address to basically draw out the conflict between what the President says he is going to do versus what he actually does.

I would like to quote some sections of Paul Krugman's column and talk about it because I think this is very important in the context of tonight's State of the Union Address.

The column says whether Mr. Bush is held accountable for the promises he made in his last State of the Union Address is a major issue. Krugman says that the President "assured those who worried about red ink last year that 'our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short-lived.' He offered comfort for those who remembered his father's 'jobless recovery,' which felt like a continuing recession: 'When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: Jobs.'

"Fast-forward a year. We now know that the 'small' budget deficit will rise above \$300 billion, and stay there. Even the administration's own, ever-optimistic budget officials now concede that we face deficits as far as the eye can see. Meanwhile, payrolls continue to decline; since the working-age population keeps rising, it's becoming ever harder for ordinary Americans to get jobs, or keep them.

"And there's a good chance things will get a lot worse; with markets sliding, consumers wilting, businesses fearful about the effects of war and oil prices rising, the pieces are in place for a full-blown double-dip recession. And the second dip would take us much further down than the first."

I think this is of a major concern to me. The President identifies that we have an economic problem, that we have an economic downturn, and he says that he is going to do something about it, but what is he actually proposing? The heart of his economic proposal or package is eliminating the tax on corporate dividends, eliminating the tax on essentially the stock market dividends.

Americans know that is not going to accomplish anything. It is not going to do anything to stimulate the economy. It is not going to put money in people's pockets or create jobs. So again, there is a credibility gap. There is recognition on the part of the President that there is a problem with the economy, but the actions that he seeks to take, unfortunately, will not correct the problem.

The President talks about homeland security. He talks about the war on terrorism, both internationally and here at home, but as my colleague from California earlier this morning pointed out, money is not going back to the States and the localities for homeland security. Money is not going back for civil defense or to help the localities or the people that were affected in New Jersey, in my case, directly by the World Trade Center. Many of our towns are complaining that they are not getting the promised funding to deal with the homeland security problem.

The President last year talked about how the deficit was going to be small, but we know that his economic plan will cause huge deficits. We are told if we implement his economic stimulus package and we make the tax cuts permanent that he proposed last year, and we have to fight a war in Iraq, we may end up with a deficit that is over \$2 trillion.

Think about what the President says about veterans. He promises to be a champion for our veterans, but he cuts funding for VA health clinics, forcing 164,000 veterans to be turned away.

He promises that he is going to expand Medicare to include a drug benefit, but instead of actually doing something now to make a difference for seniors, he blocks generic drug legislation that will lower costs for seniors and for those who want to have access to lower-priced drugs right now.