

For both employers and workers in the auto industry, it is vitally important that the publicly funded health care system be preserved and renewed, on the existing principles of universality, accessibility, portability, comprehensiveness, and public administration. The system needs a secure multi-year funding base from government, and must be expanded to cover an updated range of services (including prescription drugs and home care services) that reflects both the evolving nature of medical science and the emerging needs of our population.

To this end, Ford Motor Company and CAW-Canada jointly urge the federal and provincial governments to take appropriate actions to preserve the public health care system, secure its funding base, and modernize the range of services which it covers. In addition to reinforcing the quality and accessibility of health care for Canadians, these measures would also help to ensure the long-run success of Canada's auto industry.

ALAIN BATTY,

President and Chief Executive Officer, Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited.

BASIL "BUZZ" HARGROVE,

National President, CAW-Canada.

A FREE IRAQ

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be recognized on the floor of this United States Congress and the opportunity to address the Members.

As I sit here and listen to this discussion that has gone on tonight, I would kind of like to unravel some of this from the top down and little bit. And, again, the lamentations come down about all the things that are going wrong in the world and particularly a list of things that are allegedly going wrong in Iraq.

My colleagues might notice that my finger is purple today. And it is purple in celebration and in solidarity with the freedom of the Iraqi people. The people have gone to the polls three times in this calendar year, and each time they said it could not be done, and each time they did an even better job. The January 30 election that elected the interim government that has now put together the constitution; the October 15 election that ratified the constitution; and then today's election that concluded today, December 15 by their calendar, that has now elected a new general assembly that will select from them a prime minister. And he will be seated in March, and they will be the most sovereign, the most representative Arab country in the world. Imagine that, Madam Speaker, sitting at the United Nations with Iraq having the most integrity because they represent the real people in their government.

The argument came from the gentlewoman that there were no weapons of mass destruction and that was allegedly the only reason that we went there. When did this country give up on liberation, Madam Speaker? Did we give up on this when we went to the Philippines after the USS *Maine* was sunk in Havana Harbor? We had the Spanish-American War that took place, and the USS *Maine* is still at the bottom of the harbor in Havana. But the Filipino people were liberated by the United States Marine Corps, and today, the Filipinos are grateful that the Americans came and liberated them, and we carried over there our way of life, our free enterprise system, our property rights concept, an educational system, an English language. And today, they are a prosperous people because they were liberated by Americans in 1898.

And look at the liberation that took place in the Civil War, Madam Speaker. There the war was about States' rights. It was about saving the Union. Abraham Lincoln's efforts were focused on saving the Union. And then, later on in the war, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. No one thought too much of it at the time. Now we remember that as the war to free the slaves.

So sometimes we have to have a list of reasons why we have to go to war, Madam Speaker. And this is a war that has freed 25 million Iraqi people, 25 million Afghans, has established the lodestars for the Arab world to follow this democracy that is going to be now a prosperous Iraq, and that can bring freedom to the entire Arab world, which brings peace to most of the world as we know it and eliminates the habitat for terrorists throughout the world.

This is a very, very noble thing that this country has done. It is a very, very noble sacrifice on the part of the 2,100 and more Americans who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the Iraqi people, for the safety of the American people.

It is not a terrorist center there unless you want to say a grave center for terrorists. They are taking 3,000 terrorists off the street every month between killed and captured. That is far more than the casualties that we are taking. Saddam Hussein was killing his own people at the rate of 182 per day, Madam Speaker. That adds up to over 100,000 Iraqis that are alive today that would not be if Saddam Hussein were still running his torture chambers, still running his plastic shredder machine, and with weapons of mass destruction, real gas weapons of mass destruction, killing his own people. This adds up to a humanitarian effort that is not unsurpassed in the world but unsurpassed by other countries aside from the United States of America.

The argument that we are using dollars to purchase propaganda in the Iraqi newspapers. Good night. How far do you go to make an argument against the American people? Maybe

we ought to spend these tax dollars to try to get the real news printed in the New York Times or the Washington Post, Madam Speaker. If that is what it takes, that is what we ought to do because part of this war is to defend our troops and our military. And I am tired of listening on this floor, and I did not hear it happen tonight, of people that say, "I support our troops but I oppose the war." That means they oppose their mission, and they are asking soldiers to put their lives on the line for a mission that they do not believe in.

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

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FOREIGN-HELD DEBT

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, there are some things that Congress and the President can really do something about. And one of those is the management of our Federal accounts.

The news today reports in USA Today, Oil imports help push the trade gap to record highs. Every time I see the fact that we are importing more oil than finding ways to become more energy independent here at home, I say to myself, there is something that America really can do but is not doing.

The New York Times reported, and I include this in the RECORD, today that the U.S. trade deficit indeed has hit record highs, threatening U.S. growth. We are going deeper and deeper into debt every day with imports climbing much faster than exports. The American people know this. One can hardly find anything made in this country anymore. In fact, the trade deficit is so huge, it is now three-quarters of \$1 trillion and rising and, with it, our foreign indebtedness. This widening gap is likely to reduce our overall growth as a country.

Now, our thirst for imported petroleum as a part of this increase rose 13 percent. And the Secretary of Treasury is living in another world when he says the reason that we are going into hock is because other nations are not growing fast enough, when, in fact, other nations are the very countries that are lending us money to make up this gap.

The New York Times says a growing number of economists worry that the United States has become locked into

becoming the world's consumer of last resort, a role that is leading to ever higher levels of foreign indebtedness financed in large part by central banks of China, Japan and other Asian countries.

And not just Asian. As this chart illustrates, the amount of debt being held by foreigners is going up. Japan, over \$100 billion over last year to a level of \$681 billion. They are literally owning us, owning our debt.

Europe, \$471.8 billion. And a lot of that, I think, comes through the London markets, particularly the oil markets. So this masks some of the buying that actually is occurring through the Middle East.

China, Hong Kong, at a level now of over \$295 billion. And those kinds of ownership of our assets and debt means we owe them interest. And that level of interest is what I want to discuss tonight.

The proportion of our foreign-held debt is now nearly half of what we owe as a country. Nearly half. It has grown exponentially, and the interest we pay on that debt is one of the largest components of the Federal budget. In fact, in this coming fiscal year, the interest alone that Americans will pay to foreigners for their borrowings to us will be nearly \$100 billion. Take the amount that we have to pay Hong Kong and China for what they have lent to us. We will pay them over \$13 billion. How much is \$13 billion? \$13 billion is nearly equal to all of the money we spend as a Federal Government financing student loans in the Pell grant program to make post-secondary study a reality for thousands of students.

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How about the \$30 billion in interest that we will owe Japan, when you think that that amount is \$6 billion more than we devote to funding the No Child Left Behind Act. And it is twice as much as we spend on funding employment training and unemployment services combined.

In Ohio, for example, this past week only one school in the northeastern part of Ohio got funds in order to do additional job training, though President Bush campaigned very hard on that issue in Ohio. Ohio did not get 15 grants or 20 grants, we got one.

Our money is going to pay interest to foreigners who are lending us money. We are cutting money for Head Start by more than \$11 billion, and yet we are paying over \$100 billion to foreign interests who are lending us money. We cannot afford to pay TRICARE for the needs of those in the Guard and Reserve, many of whom are returning home and finding their benefits are cut, and we have a shortfall in the veterans affairs budget. All of those accounts put together are a pittance compared to the interest that we are paying on our foreign-owned debt.

I have introduced, along with several of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, H.R. 4405, The Trade Balancing

Act of 2005, which will require that in cases in which the annual trade deficit, that is the trade gap, the difference between imports and exports, between the United States and another country is \$10 billion a year for three consecutive years, the President must take the necessary steps to create a more balanced trading relationship with that country.

I am asking my colleagues to help communicate this message to the President, to our colleagues, before a foreclosure sign is posted on our Treasury building. There could be nothing more important that this Congress could do than to turn a sound economy over to the future.

Madam Speaker, I will place these additional articles in the RECORD. Let us put America back on an even keel.

TRADE DEFICIT HITS RECORD, THREATENING U.S. GROWTH

(By Edmund L. Andrews)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14.—The United States' trade deficit ballooned to a record in October, the government said Wednesday, with imports climbing much faster than exports even though prices for imported oil declined.

The trade deficit widened by \$3 billion, to \$68.9 billion, confounding forecasts on Wall Street that the gap would narrow and signaling that the nation's huge trade imbalance has not begun to stabilize.

The nation's deficit is on track to top \$700 billion this year, up from last year's record of \$618 billion, and its foreign indebtedness is rising at least as rapidly.

Because imports are about 50 percent higher than exports, the United States would need to increase exports twice as fast as imports simply to keep its imbalances from growing even more.

The widening gap is likely to reduce the nation's overall growth in the final quarter of this year. Morgan Stanley reduced its forecast for growth this quarter to 3 percent, from 3.4 percent on Wednesday, and Merrill Lynch shaved its already pessimistic forecast to just 2.3 percent.

News of the deficit also ignited a fresh round of political accusations in Washington over trade and globalization, with Democrats accusing President Bush of being soft on countries like China.

The United States stepped up its purchases from every part of the world and in most categories of goods, even as global demand softened, the Commerce Department reported.

The trade deficit with China through October hit \$166.8 billion, exceeding the \$162 billion deficit with China for all of last year.

Over all, the Commerce Department estimated that American exports grew by 1.7 percent in October, while imports climbed 2.7 percent.

But exports were weaker than the headline numbers implied, because virtually all of the increase stemmed from a big increase in aircraft sales after the end of a strike at Boeing.

Excluding aircraft, exports of capital goods and industrial goods were essentially flat. Exports of consumer goods declined 5.6 percent, to \$9.37 billion.

Many analysts had expected the trade deficit to narrow slightly, partly because of the increase in airplane exports and partly because oil prices declined slightly during the month.

But American thirst for imported petroleum shot up 13 percent, largely to make up for the loss of production in the Gulf of Mexico caused by Hurricane Katrina.

The United States' trade deficit with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries totaled \$77 billion for the first 10 months of this year, up from \$59.1 billion for the same period last year. The higher deficit is the result of both higher oil prices over the last year and higher volumes of imports. But that was only part of the reason that the trade balance deteriorated. The trade balance for nonpetroleum products for the first 10 months of this year has widened to \$447 billion, up from \$400 billion last year.

Representative Benjamin L. Cardin of Maryland, a top Democrat point man on trade issues, accused the Bush administration of failing to create an effective strategy for dealing with unfair trade practices.

Representative Marcy Kaptur, an Ohio Democrat, stepped up her call for legislation to force the administration to take action against countries that consistently run trade surpluses with the United States of more than \$10 billion a year.

Even some Republicans expressed dismay at the size of the deficit.

"Small business owners in Maine and across the nation are fighting to remain competitive with countries such as China that flagrantly disregard fair trade practices," said Senator Olympia J. Snowe, Republican of Maine.

The Treasury secretary, John W. Snow, said the administration was pushing countries like China, but added the trade deficit was largely a result of slow growth in other countries.

"If our major industrialized trading partners were growing faster, the U.S. wouldn't have such a large trade gap," Mr. Snow said at a briefing on the economy with Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez and Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

The American economy grew at an annual rate of 3.8 percent in the first three quarters of this year, far faster than either the European Union or Japan.

A growing number of economists worry that the United States has become locked into being the world's consumer of last resort, a role that is leading to ever higher levels of foreign indebtedness financed in a large part by central banks of China, Japan and other Asian countries.

Robert Sinche, a currency strategist at Bank of America, predicted on Wednesday that foreigners would own about \$4 trillion in American assets, about 30 percent of its gross domestic product, by the end of 2006.

IRAQ AND THE 56TH BRIGADE

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, it was truly great to have the 56th Brigade home this past weekend from Iraq. Commanded by Colonel James "Red" Brown of Lindale, Texas, they did a great thing this past year. It was the largest deployment of troops from the Texas reserve unit since World War II. This was not just a difficult year in their own and their families' lives, it was a historical year for the ages.

Many believe that the area Iraq occupies was where mankind had its beginning. There, in the cradle of mankind,