

And I know the American people and particularly our military families would appreciate a White House leak today on our double secret plan to accomplish a mission in Iraq and bring our boys and girls home. I ask Karl Rove to share that next time with a reporter.

Heck, we are still waiting for someone to leak the President's plan on Social Security. So I say do not stop here, Mr. Rove. Do not stop here, Mr. Libby. Dishing the names of our national security agents may be your idea of political, quote, fair game. But turn up that leaky faucet and tell us what we really need to know, which is the truth.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

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

There was no objection.

CAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Dominican Republic and Central American Free Trade Agreement and urge my colleagues to join me in its passage in the next week. Both the strength of our economy and the jobs available to our own people depend on our ability to gain access to new markets and offer products that are price competitive, and quality competitive. Without greater access to the global market, it is our people that pay the price. The DR-CAFTA agreement will, for the very first time, allow U.S. goods to flow into the Central American countries without tariffs, just the way Central American goods flow into America without tariffs. It merely levels the playing field.

Furthermore, it will allow us to modernize the partnership between the United States textile industry and the Central American countries. Through this partnership we can compete with China. If we lose this partnership and the opportunity to modernize it, then textiles will go to China. They will take jobs from the Central American countries and that will take jobs from America because this partnership uses entirely American yarn, and China is

unlikely to do that. So not only would our goods flow into these Central American countries without tariffs, but by modernizing the textile partnership between the United States and the Central American nations we save jobs in both countries and keep ourselves competitive with China.

Finally, this agreement helps strengthen fledgling democracies and economies that at one time were the center of civil war, terrible unrest, terrible suffering and great poverty. Through the development of their democracies and their economies, their people are beginning to do better, and by supporting that growth we can stem both legal and illegal immigration from those nations, which we would like to do.

I strongly support CAFTA, as do the majority of producers of American products from manufactured products to agricultural products, because the agreement levels the playing field for workers by immediately reducing tariffs imposed on exports to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. It zeros out many tariffs immediately, while others are reduced the first year by 80 percent. This is manufacturers, agriculture products, everything across the board.

Currently, imports from CAFTA countries enter the United States duty free, but of course our goods are not allowed to go back duty free. This is a great leveling of the playing field and will increase exports from the United States to the Central American nations.

It may surprise you to hear that Central American countries are my home State of Connecticut's largest export market for crops. Connecticut's dairy farmers will gain immediate duty free access to the Central American markets for dairy products, and all tariffs will be phased out over time. That is exactly why the American Farm Bureau has endorsed CAFTA.

Now there has been some discussion about the labor requirements, the labor provisions of CAFTA. In fact, this agreement has been roundly criticized by Members of this body who voted overwhelmingly for the agreement with Morocco and the agreement with Jordan. And yet this agreement is far tougher on labor standards and far stronger on enforcement.

I am proud to say that under this agreement, after a year's work between the Development Bank and the ILO to evaluate carefully these countries' labor laws and to upgrade those laws, to evaluate carefully their ability to enforce those laws and what had to be done to strengthen enforcement, after that year of work, all that work is embodied in this Central American agreement, the CAFTA agreement. Consequently, this agreement will enforce laws that meet the ILO standards in all these countries, 100 percent in most of them and in two of them there are constitutional provisions that essentially

make it equivalent to 100 percent. So the labor laws meet high standards and through this agreement enforcement will meet high standards.

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We not only commit money to those standards but we creatively approach for the first time the issue of enforcement. First of all, under the old agreement, if the Central American countries did not live up to their obligations to make progress in the area of labor laws, all we could do was completely cut off all trade agreements. That nuclear, that draconian option was never in the whole 22 years used. It did not work.

So in this agreement we have the right to levy stiff monetary fines, up to \$15 million per year per violation; and if that does not work, we can take away their trade benefits. But meanwhile these fines will go into a special fund to be used with American oversight and American agreement to solve specific labor problems to strengthen specific enforcement measures and to make the lives of the workers in these countries better.

Not only do we have flexibility and enforcement and new funding from the penalty system, but our country has committed \$180 million dollars to enforcement.

In sum the DR-CAFTA agreement will for the first time allow U.S. goods greater access to central American markets close to our country, allow us to modernize our textile partnership to compete directly with China, and help strengthen the fledgling democracies and economies of our southern neighbors which alone will stem immigration—legal and illegal—from those nations.

COMMEMORATING THE SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate an extremely important anniversary: 157 years ago today Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton stood before a women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York and made it known that women's rights could not be complete until they were granted the right to vote.

One hundred and fifty-seven years ago, women and men would not be considered equal without the strongest tool that existed in this country to enact change and that was the right to vote.

In the greatest democracy in the world, the idea that half of the population did not have a voice was completely unacceptable to these two women and the countless others who stood beside them such as Sojourner Truth, a very strong advocate also for women's rights.

What seems like an absolute now, that women should be part of the process, that women should be able to hold

elected officials accountable for their actions, that women themselves could become elected officials, was not the case 157 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

The women who stood up and fought back 157 years ago did so in order that we could be able to stand here today. Because of the courage of these women, we now have 69 women serving in the House of Representatives and 14 women serving in the Senate.

However, women did not receive the right to vote without a struggle. Suffragists such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Maud Wood Park, Lucy Burns and Alice Paul faced such humiliations as arrest, jail time, and derision from all directions so that women could simply walk to the voting places and speak their minds through their votes.

We owe a great deal of gratitude and great debt of gratitude to these women. Had they not marched, picketed and protested, many of us would not be standing here today. Unfortunately, many women are not making the most of this right that many fought so powerfully to secure.

Our voices are no less important than they were many decades ago. Our ideas and beliefs are held no less powerful. Women have the power to make changes and affect policy. They can do so simply by going to the voting booths. However, while 60 percent of the women voted in the last election as opposed to 56 percent of men, a full 32 percent of women are still not registered to vote. A shocking 45 percent of young women ages 18 to 24 are not registered to vote.

It is not enough for women to rest on our laurels given that we have and do have the right to vote. We actually have to get out and make our voices heard. We must engage all women in the process. We must demonstrate to them that their voices matter to us. We must devote our energies to letting young women know that, like their counterparts 157 years ago, their participation can change the path of history.

I want to thank these women who fought so hard 157 years ago so that women across this land could vote and can continue to vote and that I could have the opportunity to stand here today and give thanks to them.

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

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

A VIEW OF IRAQ FROM A SOLDIER

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening I wish to enter into the

RECORD the compelling story of one of our soldiers from Iraq.

This is a soldier who voluntarily joined our Army in February 2002; trained as an infantryman at Fort Benning, Georgia; sent to Fort Riley; participated in the opening stages of the war, fighting all the way to Baghdad where he would remain for the next year and was promoted to the rank of sergeant during his service to the United States and was honorably discharged. He is 27 years old.

His writings include this: A view of Iraq from a soldier dated this July 2005. He says, "I am a concerned veteran of the Iraq War. I can offer some firsthand experience of the war on Iraq through the eyes of a soldier.

"My view of the situation in Iraq will differ from what the American people are being told by the Bush administration. My opinion on this matter comes from what I witnessed in Iraq personally."

He talks about members of the Bush administration creating an image of wine and roses in terms of the aftermath of the war. And Vice President DICK CHENEY said American troops would be greeted as liberators. But he goes on to say, "I participated in the invasion, stayed in Iraq for a year afterward. What I witnessed was the total opposite of what President Bush and his administration stated to the American people. The invasion was very confusing," this soldier says, "and so was the period of time I spent in Iraq afterwards. At first it did seem that all the people of Iraq were happy to be rid of Saddam Hussein, but that was only for a short period of time.

"Shortly after Saddam's regime fell, the Shiite Muslims in Iraq conducted a pilgrimage to Karbala, a pilgrimage prohibited by Saddam while he was in power. As I witnessed the Shiite pilgrimage, which was a new freedom that we provided to them, they used the pilgrimage to protest our presence in the country. I watched as they beat themselves over the head with sticks until they bled and screamed at us in anger to leave their country. Some even carried signs that read, 'No Saddam, No America.'"

"These were people that Saddam oppressed. They were his enemies. To me it seemed they hated us more than him. At that moment I knew it was going to be a long deployment. I realized that I was not being greeted as a liberator. I became overwhelmed with fear because I felt I would never be viewed that way by the Iraqi people.

"As a soldier this concerned me because if they did not view me as a liberator, then what did they view me as? I felt they viewed me as a foreign occupier of their land. That led me to believe very early on that I was going to have a fight on my hands.

"During my year in Iraq I had many altercations with the so-called insurgency. I found the insurgency I saw to be quite different from the insurgency described to the American people by

the Bush administration, the media, and the supporters of the war. There is no doubt in my mind there are foreigners from other surrounding countries in Iraq. Anyone in the Middle East who hates America now has the opportunity to kill Americans because there are roughly 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq.

"But the bulk of the insurgency I faced was primarily the people of Iraq who were attacking us as a reaction to what they felt was an occupation of their country. I was engaged actively in urban combat in the Abu Ghraib area west of Baghdad. Many of the people who were attacking me were the poor people of Iraq. They were definitely not members of al Qaeda, left-over Baath party members, and they were not former members of Saddam's regime. They were just your average Iraqi civilian who wanted us out of their country.

"On October 31, 2003, the people of Abu Ghraib organized a large uprising against us. They launched a massive assault on our compound in the area. We were attacked with AK-47 machine guns, RPGs and mortars. Thousands of people took to the streets to attack us. As the riot unfolded before my eyes, I realized these were just the people who lived there. There were men, women and children participating. Some of the Iraqi protestors were even carrying pictures of Saddam Hussein.

"My battalion fought back with everything we had and eventually shut down the uprising. So while President Bush speaks of freedom and liberation of the Iraqi people, I find his statements are not credible after witnessing events such as these.

"During the violence that day, I felt so much fear throughout my entire body. I remember going home that night and praying to God, thanking him I was still alive.

"A few months earlier President Bush made the statement 'Bring it on' when referring to the attacks on Americans by the insurgency. To me that felt like a personal invitation to the insurgents to attack me and my friends who desperately wanted to make it home alive.

"I did my job well in Iraq. My superiors promoted me to the rank of sergeant. I was made a rifle team leader and was put in charge of other soldiers when we carried out our missions. My time as a team leader in Iraq was temporarily interrupted when I was sent to the Green Zone in Baghdad to train the Iraqi Army. And I was more than happy to do it because we were being told in order for us to get out of Iraq completely, the Iraqi military would have to be able to take over all security operations.

"The training of the Iraqi Army became a huge concern of mine. During the time I trained them, their basic training was only one week long. We showed them some basic drill and ceremonies such as marching and saluting."