

Too many of our Senators, too many of our House Members voted for these trade agreements that outsourced jobs, these job-killing trade agreements that devastate our communities. When places like Mansfield and Chillicothe and Portsmouth and Zanesville and Lima lose these kinds of industrial manufacturing jobs, they hurt our schools, they mean fewer police on the street, they mean weaker fire protection, they mean hardship for our families.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that Members of Congress stood up and quit passing these job-killing trade agreements.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE FEDERAL CONSENT DECREE FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk about the Federal Consent Decree Fairness Act that I hope we see on the floor during this Congress. Mr. GARRETT from New Jersey and Mr. BISHOP from Utah and other members of the Congressional Constitution Caucus are also speaking on behalf of this important legislation tonight. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER), who is the lead cosponsor of this legislation along with me.

I am pleased to be the sponsor of the Federal Consent Decree Fairness Act. I would like to start by explaining what it is not about. This bill is not about reining in an activist judiciary or about ending consent decrees. This legislation is about increasing the responsibility and accountability of elected officials. This is really focused on what elected officials are elected to do.

Consent decrees are too often used by elected officials as an excuse not to solve the problems they have been elected to solve. The principal goal of this legislation is to return the responsibility for public policy-making and the governing of public institutions to elected officials. When a consent decree lasts for decades, as many of them do, many elected officials never have the opportunity to take responsibility for important public services. A politician can say, I would really like to do something about the transportation system in Los Angeles County, for example, but I cannot because of that consent decree. Or I would like to spend more on education in this State, but I really cannot because our budget is determined by these consent decrees on other issues or even on education itself. And their successors in that of-

fice can and often do say the same thing.

Consent decrees, in my view, have become a hiding place for public officials, relieving them of responsibility in the area that the consent decree affects. So let me again repeat, this is a bill, an act, that would really make public officials take responsibility for the things they have been elected to do.

This bill would create an obligation on the part of newly elected public officials that they would have an opportunity to look at every consent decree that their predecessors were part of and defend why the consent decree should continue or go to the courts and explain why the consent decree no longer applies. If the plaintiff can explain to the judge why it is important that the consent decree continue, then the decree stays in place.

Our goal is to return public responsibility to public officials. Too many people in the country today, too many public officials who even try to take on these issues find that the consent decrees that were entered into decades before by their predecessors prevent them from doing the hard things that need to be done.

The only consent decrees that could be dissolved under this action are those in which the plaintiff is incapable of proving a continued need for court supervision. If there is no longer a need for court supervision, would it not be undemocratic not to return the policy decisions to elected officials and in turn to the voters?

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

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ WEEK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, this is Iraq Week in the House of Representatives, called by the Republican majority in hopes that they can stop the bleeding, not on the ground in Iraq, but in the opinion polls in this country.

They want to capitalize on the success of the U.S. military last week and define progress in Iraq all over again. Over the last 3 years, the definition of progress by the Republican majority has been as elusive as the President's plan for Iraq.

Still, later this week after lots of Republican speech making, the majority leader will force-feed the American people a new resolution telling them

what to think about the Iraq war. In the fine print is a desperate effort by the Republicans to cling to power in the November election. That is what this week is all about.

Republican leaders hope to commandeer the news cycle and convince the American people that Republicans deserve to stay despite their record on Iraq. In other words, Iraq Week is a staged Republican campaign event.

The resolution the Republicans will force through the House of Representatives on Friday will have nothing to do with increasing the safety of our Nation or the security of our soldiers on the ground in Iraq. It is about the security of the Republican grip on power. The Republicans fear the American people have answered Newt Gingrich's question. Do you remember it? "Had enough?" Well, they have. Poll after poll says the American people indeed have had enough of Republican power. The American people always have accepted sacrifice when it comes to defending the Nation. But one thing they have never accepted is being misled by their leaders. The American people have heard enough to know the trust they placed in the President over his justification to invade Iraq was misplaced.

The American people have seen enough to know this administration and the Republican Congress have no plan except to keep declaring progress. The words, however, pale compared to the images they see on TV every day. Enough facts have emerged for the American people to know that Iraq has become a grim lesson we learned a long time ago in Vietnam. But instead of transferring responsibility, the President declares the tide has turned, U.S. troops will stay in Iraq, and there will be difficult days ahead.

That is a Presidential declaration that more American soldiers will die, more American soldiers will suffer grave physical injuries, more American soldiers will be exposed to depleted uranium, and more American soldiers will return home traumatized by post-traumatic stress disorder.

This is today's reality, and the truth is there is no end in sight. And you will not hear that from the President. Earlier this year, U.S. military commanders talked about significant force reductions by the end of the year. They have stopped talking about it. That is because the reality on the ground in Iraq defies the Republican spin.

But the spinning goes on. Yesterday at Camp Neocon, that is what they used to call Camp David, the President called together the administration in a new effort to define progress. It was a campaign meeting meant to manage the news the American people receive about Iraq. Today, the President made a surprise visit to Iraq, not unlike landing on an aircraft carrier to declare mission accomplished. It wasn't then and it isn't now.

Soon, the Republican leaders will tell the American people what to think,

without the information on which to make an informed decision. Here is something they do not want to talk about: the U.S. is building Fortress Iraq, a \$600 million embassy, the biggest in the world.

What lurks ahead for the United States is another grim and painful lesson we learned a long time ago. The administration would like to divert your attention while it orders the military to pour concrete runways and bunkers across Iraq. Tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers are going to be stationed in Iraq indefinitely. These bases will be called something else for the American people, but they will still be targets for the insurgents.

Not everyone has access to enterprise journalism being produced by the mainstream news organizations. So in the interest of promoting a resolution of truth about Iraq, I will enter into the RECORD two recent news articles. The first is from the Los Angeles Times entitled: "Give the Defense Department an F." "A Roadblock to Unity in Iraq" was published in the Salt Lake City Tribune. Read them. Make up your own mind.

The definition of progress in Iraq is not a Republican resolution force-fed to the Congress, as they would have you believe. The definition of progress is bringing our soldiers home, all of them, in significant numbers every month from this moment on until they are out of harm's way and we are out of the war that we should never have been in in the first place.

[From the Los Angeles Times, June 3, 2006]

GIVE THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AN F

(By Anthony H. Cordesman)

If the United States is to win in Iraq, it needs an honest and objective picture of what is happening there. The media and outside experts can provide pieces of this picture, but only the U.S. government has the resources and access to information to offer a comprehensive overview.

But the quarterly report to Congress issued May 30 by the Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," like the weekly reports the State Department issues on Iraq, is profoundly flawed. It does more than simply spin the situation to provide false assurances to lawmakers and the public. It makes basic analytical and statistical mistakes, fails to define key terms, provides undefined and unverifiable survey information and deals with key issues by omission. It deserves an overall grade of F.

The report provides a fundamentally false picture of the political situation in Iraq and of the difficulties ahead. It does not prepare Congress or the American people for the years of effort that will be needed even under "best-case" conditions nor for the risk of far more serious forms of civil conflict. Some of its political reporting is simply incompetent. For example, the report repeatedly states that 77% of the Iraqi population voted in the December 2005 election. Given that the CIA estimates that almost 40% of the population is 14 or younger, there is no conceivable way that 77% of the population could have voted. The report says 12.2 million voters turned out. The CIA estimates Iraq's population is 26.8 million. This means roughly 46% of the population voted.

The far more serious problem, however, is the spin the report puts on the entire Iraqi

political process. Political participation surely rose. But that wasn't because of acceptance of the new government or an embrace of a democratic political process; it reflected a steady sharpening of sectarian divisions, as Sunnis tried to make up for their decision to boycott earlier elections.

The report touts a "true unity government with broad-based buy-in from major electoral lists and all of Iraq's communities." But its own data tell a different story. The one largely secular party won only 9% of parliament. The sectarian Shiite party, the United Iraqi Alliance, got 47%. The equally sectarian Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front got 16%, and the Kurdish Coalition got 19%. That hardly adds up to "unity."

The five-month delay in forming a government after the elections, the failure to appoint ministers of defense or interior and the fact that former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari relinquished his post only after strong pressure from the United States and from Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani are signs that progress is likely to be slow in the future as well. Sectarian conflict has become almost as serious a threat as the insurgency.

It is scarcely reassuring to be told by the Defense Department that the February attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra marked a defeat for the insurgents and Islamic extremists because it did not instantly lead to all-out civil war. It is hard to think of a worse definition of victory.

The economic section of the report contains useful data and reflects some real progress in the Iraqi financial sector. However, its analysis is flawed to the point of being actively misleading. No meaningful assessment is provided of the successes and failures of the U.S. aid effort, and no mention is made of the massive corruption and mismanagement of U.S. aid discovered by the special inspector general for Iraqi reconstruction.

Nor is there meaningful analysis of oil developments, budget and revenue problems or future needs for aid. More than \$30 billion in U.S. funds and nearly \$35 billion in Iraqi money is involved, yet there is a serious risk that the Bush administration will do more than omit the inspector general's report. In fact, some State Department officials and Republicans in Congress are trying to put the inspector general out of business.

The report's handling of the key issue of Iraqi unemployment is symptomatic of the victory of spin over content. The report quotes vague national figures of 18% unemployment and states that other estimates range between 25% and 40%. By saying that unemployment and poverty "remain concerns" but that there are "substantial difficulties in measuring them accurately," it glosses over one of the most destabilizing aspects of Iraq. It ignores the failure of the aid program to create real jobs, especially for young men in areas of high crime and insurgency. Unemployment is not a casual macro-economic factoid; it is central to bringing stability and security and to defeating the insurgency.

The Defense Department's reporting on the Iraqi police forces simply cannot be trusted. Death squads rampage in police uniforms, but there is only passing mention of staff problems, corruption, sectarian tensions or horrific prison abuses. There is no meaningful analysis of problems so severe that the U.S. has called for a "year of the police" and Iraq's new prime minister, Nouri Maliki, is considering reorganizing the entire force.

The United States is making real progress in some aspects of building the Iraqi regular military. Yet there is still a tendency to promise too much, too soon, to understate the risk and the threat, and to disguise the fact that the U.S. must be ready to support

Iraq at least through 2008 and probably through 2010.

The U.S. cannot afford to repeat the mistakes it made in Vietnam. Among them was dangerous self-delusion. The strategy President Bush is pursuing in Iraq is high risk. If it is to have any chance of success, it will require bipartisan persistence and sustained American effort. This requires trust, and trust cannot be built without integrity. That means credible reporting.

The American people and Congress need an honest portrayal of what is happening, not halftruths by omission and spin.

[From the Salt Lake Tribune, June 8, 2006]

A ROADBLOCK TO UNITY IN IRAQ

(By Trudy Rubin)

BAGHDAD, IRAQ.—The air-conditioning has been broken for three months in the cavernous convention center where Iraq's national assembly meets, so the members were sweating profusely in the 115-degree heat.

Male delegates in Shiite turbans or the flowing robes of sheikhs or shirts and slacks, along with women in enveloping black chadors and colorful Kurdish dress—and a few females with uncovered hair—gathered in clusters Sunday as they waited for the session to begin.

This was supposed to be the meeting that finally confirmed the key members of an Iraqi government, five months after elections last December. This is supposed to be the national unity government of Shiites, Kurds—and Sunnis—on which the Bush administration counts to undermine the Sunni-led insurgency. The success of this national unity government is a key to bringing American troops home.

The delay in forming this government has sparked the worst chaos in Baghdad since Saddam Hussein fell. So delegates were eager for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to keep his pledge to name the ministers of interior and defense. Those ministers are essential to restoring some security to Iraq.

Suddenly a buzz rippled through the hall.

The session had been canceled.

Squabbles among fellow Shiites over who should get the ministries had prevented Maliki from keeping his promise. That day painted a stark picture of the challenges confronting this national unity government, on which Iraqi and U.S. hopes hang.

Rather than bring Iraqis together, this government has reflected Iraq's fragmentation. The situation may be salvaged, but it will take determined leadership from a handful of key Iraqi politicians, as well as from the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad.

Maliki tried from the start to act like a leader. He promised a new plan to secure Baghdad and flew to the key oil city of Basra to try to halt wars between Shiite militias and gangs. He made the pledge to name the ministers.

But Iraq's new constitution keeps the prime minister impossibly weak—a reaction to the Hussein dictatorship. And the Iraqi political culture ties him in knots.

In order to choose his two ministers, Maliki first had to get seven Shiite factions to agree among themselves on the names (they couldn't), then win over Sunnis and Kurds and Khalilzad. The prime minister lacks the power to take decisions on his own.

"We all feel sympathy for the prime minister," I was told by Adnan Ali al-Kadhimi, an adviser to the former prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari. "The constitution puts too many ties on the prime minister, and political leaders give themselves too many privileges."

Indeed, the current system, in which ministries are doled out like fiefs to ethnic and

religious parties, has led to incredible corruption.

"Political position in Iraq has become a way to steal money and then leave the country," says one official in the defense ministry, where tens of millions of dollars vanished. With few exceptions, the new crop of ministers, also picked by party, does not appear much better than the old.

This system has made many Iraqis sour on democracy quickly. They are hungry for strong leadership. Over and over, I've heard Iraqis say Hussein could have restored order in two weeks.

This is why it is so crucial for Maliki to be able to act as a national leader who stands above the interests of sectarian parties. But it isn't easy for Maliki to make that leap. For one thing, he has virtually no experienced staff; much of what he does have is limited to his Shiite religious party, the Dawa.

I asked one of the bright lights in the new government, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, what was to be done. Salih, a Kurd whom I met over a kebab feast in his garden with his peshmerga (Kurdish militia) guards, manages to combine ethnic loyalty with a commitment to building an Iraq for all its people.

"Prime Minister Maliki says he wants to transcend his Shia affiliation and act as a national leader," Salih said. "It is incumbent on all of us in Iraq and Iraq's friends in the international community to help us realize that objective."

It is unclear how or if that can be done. But the prospects for Iraq and for U.S. troop withdrawals depend on whether Maliki can lead.

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

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

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ALTERNATIVE FUELS RESEARCH

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

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to tell the House and the United States that leading edge research into the development of alternative fuels is happening as we speak in the Fifth District of Virginia at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, Virginia. The institute is a mission of Virginia's land grant institution, Virginia Tech. The institute anchors the technology economy of southside Virginia, and one of its research initiatives focus on sustainable and renewable resources.

In particular, the scientists working in this field are directing their efforts toward generating alternative energy from renewable resources such as switchgrass and hybrid poplars. The scientists believe that these renewable resources can be used in biofuels, biodiesels and bioenergy. The research being conducted at the institute is not

just laboratory work, it is applied research. In that light, the institute has formed a partnership with Wendy Acres Nursery in Gretna, Virginia, also in the Fifth District. At Wendy Acres, they are growing species of switchgrass and hybrid poplar which have a low ash content when processed. This characteristic makes these plants better suited for bioenergy and biofuels. These species are being bred and investigated for use in short-rotation woody plant species and herbaceous perennials as feedstocks by the Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources to determine the most efficient production of bioenergy and biofuels.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a container of wood chips. I also have a container of switchgrass. What the scientists have come up with is this biofuel. This is just steps away from being able to be utilized in vehicles all across this Nation. I look forward to the day when we have no dependence on Venezuela and Mr. Chavez for our oil needs. I look forward to the day when we have no dependence on the Middle East and sheiks there for our oil needs. I look forward to the day when we are free of foreign fossil fuel. And I hope all across America we can do as they are doing in Danville and other places, making our own fuel and giving us energy independence.

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

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

AMERICA'S AGRICULTURE

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight deeply concerned about the future of our Nation's farm economy and the well-being of our farmers and ranchers. America's farm families provide the most safe, reliable and abundant source of food and fiber in the world. The security of our Nation's domestic food supply is critically important to the security of our homeland. We must continue to provide our farm families with the tools and resources necessary to continue producing our food and fiber to ensure we never become as dependent on foreign countries for our food as we are for our oil today.

I was extremely disappointed in this Republican Congress and their decision to cut agriculture disaster funding during conference committee negotiations of the emergency supplemental appropriations bill last week. I was also struck by the fact that the administra-

tion even weighed in by threatening its first veto ever of this supplemental if it contained disaster assistance for our farm families. Making these cuts on the backs of our farmers and ranchers when they are struggling to make ends meet is unconscionable.

Mr. Speaker, it is about priorities, and the decision made by this Republican Congress and administration does not reflect the commonsense priorities and values that many Arkansans and I were raised on and still believe in.

Agriculture is Arkansas' largest industry and ranks among the top 10 States in the production of rice, poultry, cotton, catfish and baitfish. In fact, one in every five Arkansas jobs is directly related to agriculture. According to a forecast by USDA's Economic Research Service, farm income is estimated to decline by \$16.5 billion in 2006 as a result of increased production costs and reductions in market assistance. Reduction in farm income, combined with the hardships experienced during the 2005 crop year, will lead our Nation's farm economy into the worst decline of the 21st century.

As you can see from the poster here, Mr. Speaker, the red line, the top line, indicates the amount of money that it costs our farmers to grow crops. The bottom line demonstrates the amount of money they have received. They are losing money. In 1985, farmers spent anywhere from \$80,000 to \$85,000 on a new tractor. Today, a farmer will spend anywhere from \$140,000 to \$150,000 on a new tractor.

As the chart shows, our farm families have seen a steady increase in the cost to produce their crops, while at the same time the prices they receive for their crops remain the same and are lower than they were 10 years ago. In fact, in 1980, cotton was going for 60 cents a pound. Today, it is 42 cents a pound. Rice was going for \$11.50 per hundred weight. Today, it is \$7 per hundred weight. Soybeans, in 1980, \$5.71 a bushel. Today, just a slight increase, at \$6.09 a bushel.

In 2005, our Nation's farm families faced severe droughts, hurricane damaging winds and other natural events causing damage and devastation to their crops and livestock. Americans have been hit hard by the drastic increase in gasoline, diesel and natural gas prices. Our Nation's farm sector relies heavily on diesel fueled farm equipment to plant, harvest and transport their products to market. Increased fuel, fertilizer and other record high input costs have pushed many farmers out of business altogether, forcing them to auction off their family farms.

I have been urging this Republican Congress and administration to pass disaster assistance for our farm families since September of last year. I stand here tonight holding this binder, a binder recently presented to me by Ken Shea of Dumas, Arkansas. It is filled with farm auction after farm auction, fliers, notices of bankrupt