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FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH PERU AND PANAMA

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, soon President Bush's administration will force upon this Congress consideration of free trade agreements with Peru and Panama under the fast-track process. That means no amendments allowed here in the Congress.

The bills they will bring before us are modeled on the flawed NAFTA model that have yielded growing trade deficits every year the Bush administration has been in office. We have seen how NAFTA sucked good jobs away from Americans, how it ravaged the Mexican countryside and triggered a flow of illegal immigrants, drugs and violence across our southern border.

Our staggering trade deficit with Mexico continues to grow. This year, we already have a \$21.6 billion deficit with Mexico, and it will continue to swell as communities across the continent face job washout.

If we do not construct a new trade model that takes people into consideration and advocates free trade among free people, then it does not matter how many environmental provisions we may add to trade agreements or how unique the administration claims its labor provisions are.

We are simply extending NAFTA to the rain forest and to more sweat shops because there will be no reliable enforcement.

We have seen the NAFTA model fail in Mexico. We have seen it fail in CAFTA countries. Why should we assume it will be any less disastrous in Peru or Panama?

We cannot fall for empty promises again. When we were told that NAFTA would result in a trade surplus, when we were told that NADBANC would help communities that were faced with job loss with reinvestment, when we were told NAFTA would be beneficial for Mexicans, Canadians, and the legislation passed this Congress, what did we see? Billions and billions of trade deficit dollars racked up.

We have never had a positive trade balance with the NAFTA countries or the CAFTA countries. We saw a washout of jobs in our middle-class communities, and we saw huge and growing protests across Mexico. It's a mistake to pass NAFTA, and it will be a mistake to extend it to other countries without comprehensive and effective reform.

This time Congress must be smarter. We must realize the administration is feeding us empty promises without enforceability and clear benefits. We should have no reason to be fooled again.

Even if we succeed with some changes to the core text of these agreements, do we trust President Bush to

enforce them? We are still waiting for him to enforce the flagrant violations in the Jordanian agreement, where such language was included in the core of the trade agreement.

It is bad enough that his administration has the power to avoid any meaningful congressional amendment or any amendment at all. We cannot trust President Bush with fairly negotiating trade agreements, and we certainly cannot trust him to fairly enforce them.

If Congress passes these agreements with Peru and Panama, we only stand to perpetuate the race to the bottom cycle of lowered wages, reduced benefits worldwide, by taking these steps under the slippery slope of the Bush trade agreement that rewards Wall Street and its investors, but penalizes main streets across our Nation.

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.)

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

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

LET'S BRING OUR SOLDIERS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, earlier today I made mention of an interesting new theory that is being promoted through the Nation's newspapers, and, certainly, let me acknowledge the respect that we have in this Congress for the United States military and their never-ending challenge and acceptance of responsibility in their work in Iraq and certainly, of course, Afghanistan.

We know that both of those regions are becoming more difficult. In Afghanistan, the Taliban is rising, and, frankly, just recently, there was an attempted assassination attack on President Karzai in Afghanistan with a message from the Taliban saying that "We were involved" and, in essence, "We are on the rise."

In fact, that is where the root of terror is. After 9/11, that is where this Congress almost unanimously instructed the President on behalf of the American people to fight the war on terror, to fight al Qaeda, and to find Osama bin Laden. Unfortunately, this administration has failed, failed its duty to this Nation, and not represented itself to the American people and to this Congress as to what its next steps are with respect to fighting terror.

Now we find ourselves muddling around in Iraq, we are almost to the middle of June, and almost 30 Americans have died in Iraq. This is an unending mission without a mission, an unending story without an end.

Now we read in the Nation's newspaper America's strategy in Iraq to arm the Sunnis. But at the same time as we arm the Sunnis, we are in negotiations with them to promise us that they will not shoot American soldiers.

I believe that this may be a reasonable response to arm Sunnis to fight al Qaeda, to arm Sunnis to engage with the Iraqi National Army. But it is not a reasonable response with American soldiers sitting in the line of fire.

Again, I say, having visited with my constituents over the weekend, having visited with constituents in churches and grocery stores, in meetings, in civic meetings, everywhere I go, in religious institutions or houses of faith, everywhere I go in my congressional district, people are asking the singular question. That is, when are our soldiers going to come home from Iraq?

When I get the loudest applause is when I say that this Congress must bring our soldiers home, and that it is my intention to work with every Member of Congress who is willing to stand up to ensure that our soldiers come home, not because of our job has not been completed, not because our soldiers are not strong, not because our soldiers are wimps, but because, in fact, our soldiers are heroes.

I believe, as in my legislation H.R. 930, that we should bring them home under a military success. They have done their job. They have deposed Saddam Hussein. They have discovered that there were no weapons of mass destruction. They have finished the mission.

We should declare a military victory for those soldiers and those who lost their lives and begin to transfer the leadership of the efforts in Iraq to the Iraqi national Army and the Iraqi national police. I cannot understand this theory, this particular strategy, when our soldiers are still on the ground. All I can see is armed Sunnis, armed al Qaeda, armed Shiites, all pointing guns at our soldiers, who are there, simply, to follow the mission of a President who will not listen.

I am interested in military strategy. I want our military generals to be creative. If they believe that this is an effective tool, then this tool must be utilized without our soldiers, in essence, if I might say, without any disrespect, to be shooting targets or sitting ducks.

This does not seem to be the right kind of approach if our soldiers are still going to be in the midst. Even if they relocate the soldiers out of the particular area, they are still on the ground. Armed Sunnis are armed Sunnis. Armed Sunnis and armed Shiites move around. They don't necessarily have to stay in one area.

I expect that we will have a briefing tomorrow. I hope that they will discuss

with us, the Members of Congress, on behalf of their constituents, what does this mean for the lives of our soldiers? What does this mean for the number of those who have lost their lives already and their brothers and sisters may now be in the greater line of fire with people being armed, and armed with what?

What level of weaponry will they have, and how far will this weaponry be able to go, and what will they be able to do with it? It is obviously a challenge.

It is time to bring our soldiers home. If this is what we are doing, let's transfer the fight to the Iraqi national Army and the Iraqi police.

Let's bring our soldiers home.

REPORT ON H.R. 2643, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Ms. KAPTUR, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-187) on the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

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

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

U.S. TRADE POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, it's a great pleasure that we are talking this evening about an issue very important to a lot of us in this Congress, and a lot of folks throughout the United States of America, and that issue is trade.

I would like to yield to a colleague of mine. We came in this Congress together, and she has been very active in the trade deal and has established with me the trade working group in this Congress, Congresswoman LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in addressing the House and the American people regarding U.S. trade policy and its effect on working families.

Let me start by saying, first of all, that I am committed to trade. That's

right, I think that trade is good for America and its working families. If we do it the right way, trade can increase the availability of raw materials for production. Trade can also open markets for American goods and can bring exciting new products to American consumers. While I recognize the benefits of trade, not all trade agreements are created equal.

On May 10, the administration and Members of this House announced a "new policy on trade." Well, it's about time. Democrats have been calling for a new direction in trade for years, and I am pleased that the administration has finally taken initial steps to improve its trade policy.

But, alas, it is too little, too late. This new trade policy is little more than a rehash of the same failed NAFTA model that has been hurting U.S. families for more than a decade. According to the administration, the new additions to the Peru and Panama agreements would add long-sought labor and environmental protections to the basic NAFTA framework.

Unfortunately, even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says that these new worker and environmental protections can't be enforced. That's not very encouraging, is it? Supporting this new deal requires us to believe in two things: number one, the actual benefits of the NAFTA free trade model; and, number 2, the promises of the Bush administration.

We are supposed to trust an administration that has demonstrated its commitment to anything but the truth. Having misled us on issues like domestic wire-tapping programs, the war in Iraq, global warming, and the firing of U.S. attorneys, it now seeks our trust. How are we supposed to trust a record like that?

We have also learned some very hard lessons after more than 10 years of free trade failures. As we hear more familiar promise about the new trade deal, let's look at some of the old ones. NAFTA was supposed to solve illegal integration by developing a robust economy in Mexico that would allow hard-working people to provide for their families and stay at home. Well, that didn't work.

CAFTA was supposed to include bold new safety and wage protections for workers, but these protections are disappointingly weak, allowing countries to downgrade their very own labor laws.

In the Oman Free Trade Agreement, the administration actually negotiated a deal with a opportunity that, as our own State Department reported, was experiencing a forced labor problem—forced labor. How are our workers supposed to compete with people who are forced to toil?

Free trade was supposed to increase economic opportunity for everybody, for big businesses, as well as working families at home and abroad. But it simply hasn't happened.

Too many communities have been left to rot because corporations shut

down U.S. plants to chase increasingly cheap labor and weak environmental protections abroad. After decades of living with NAFTA and its clones, real wages for American families are down. Our trade deficit is in the tens of billions of dollars, and our manufacturing base is falling apart.

The American worker is now more productive than ever, but that increased productivity has not led to a corresponding increase in wages. The truth is that the NAFTA free trade model is designed to favor the wealthiest few and corporate bottom lines at the expense of small businesses, workers, families and communities.

In the coming weeks, we will be asked to consider first two of the Bush administration's trade priorities, free trade agreements with Peru and Panama. Despite the long record of failed free trade agreements, the Bush administration and free traders are going to tell us that Peru and Panama agreements are less controversial than the administration's other priorities, free trade agreements with Colombia and Korea, and the renewal of the President's fast-track negotiating authority.

This is a sign of how bad Peru and Panama trade deals are. Their only redeeming value, it seems, is that they are not as bad as the deals with Korea and Colombia. But that argument misses the point. Every bad trade agreement passed, makes it easier for another bad trade agreement to slip by.

When they say "not that bad," we should say "not good enough." Let's keep our eyes on the ball.

The Peru and Panama free-trade agreements are slippery slopes to other bad deals. Passing these deals makes it easier for the Bush administration to push through the Korea free-trade agreement which would gut the American car industry.

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It would make it easier for the White House to push through fast track authority, which gives the President a blank check to create additional agreements that gut our communities and our economy.

Passing the Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreements puts us on a slippery slope toward passing the Bush-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, a deeply flawed trade deal for working families in both countries.

I just returned from Colombia, and this was my second trip in 7 months. On these visits I talked with leaders from civil society, indigenous groups, organized labor and the political opposition.

Colombia is a great country with wonderful people, a vibrant culture and a growing economy. However, Colombia remains the most dangerous country in the world for worker advocates. Despite recent progress, the Colombian Government has still been unable to protect labor organizers from being attacked or killed over any specific