

FOREIGN SHORTFALLS IN IRAQ AID PLEDGES

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House and to the American people a disturbing situation involving a shortfall in Iraq aid pledges. This morning during a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, I also brought this issue to the attention of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and Admiral Michael Mullen.

On January 30, 2008, USA Today reported that allied countries have paid only \$2.5 million of the more than \$15.8 billion they pledged to help rebuild Iraq. The article further reports: "The biggest shortfalls in pledges by 41 donor countries are from Iraq's oil-rich neighbors and U.S. allies, namely Saudi Arabia and Kuwait."

Madam Speaker, it is extremely troubling that some of the countries that may benefit most from a secure and stable Iraq, particularly its neighbors in the region, are not providing the money they pledged to help achieve that goal.

The United States, on the other hand, has already spent \$29 billion to help rebuild Iraq, and Congress has approved an additional \$16.5 billion. And unlike the United States, which is borrowing money from foreign governments to pay its bills, many of Iraq's neighbors are running record surpluses because of profits their governments receive from their national oil companies.

In 2001 a gallon of gasoline cost Americans \$1.42. Today that same gallon costs us \$3.36. In 2001 oil was \$28 per barrel. Today that same barrel is almost \$114. Many of the countries who are falling short on their pledges to Iraq are withholding oil production and causing gas prices to rise on the American consumer. These countries have the economic resources to meet their commitments to Iraq.

Madam Speaker, in a letter on February 8 of this year, I expressed these concerns to Secretary Rice. Since then I received a response from the Department of State. They say they share my concern that for some countries the pace of their assistance to Iraq has been too slow. The State Department also indicates that top officials continue to urge their government to follow through on their pledges, and with the increased successes, the department is working through multilateral forums to encourage donors to meet their pledges.

During this morning's hearing, Secretary Rice also pledged that she will redouble her efforts to encourage allies in the region to pay their way in Iraq. Madam Speaker, out of fairness to the American taxpayer, I am hopeful that

these efforts will be successful. It is time for Arab countries that are running surpluses to start paying their share of the bills in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I have said many times and said it today at the hearing that it's our men and women who are in Iraq losing their legs, being paralyzed for the rest of their life, and losing their life for this country. It is the least that these Arab countries can do that are making dollars every time we put gas in our cars. It is time that they meet their obligation to fulfill the \$15.8 billion that they pledged to help rebuild Iraq.

With that, Madam Speaker, before I close, I ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform, and I ask God to continue to bless America.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5715, ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO STUDENT LOAN ACT OF 2008

Ms. CASTOR, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-590) on the resolution (H. Res. 1107) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5715) to ensure continued availability of access to the Federal student loan program for students and families, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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.)

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Madam Speaker, this week is Week of the Young Child, and I stand before you and my colleagues this evening to call for the full funding of Head Start, our Nation's premier early education program, and for Child Care and Development Block Grants.

I understand firsthand how important Head Start and subsidized child care programs are for low-income working families. I grew up in poverty, and I had a single mother who suffered from mental illness. I relied on support from my extended family, community, and friends. And as a result of the support that I received, I was able to focus on school, work hard, and achieve the American Dream. However, not all children are fortunate enough to have this sort of support system outside of their homes, and even with this additional support, many of Iowa's children could benefit from attending Head Start. Additionally, many hard-

working, low-income parents could more easily push their families out of poverty if provided access to affordable and reliable child care. This is why it is critical that we properly fund Head Start and Child Care and Development Block Grants so we can expand enrollment and provide greater support to working families and opportunity to our Nation's children.

For years we have been provided with statistics proving the benefits of Head Start and affordable child care. We know that children enrolled in Head Start will excel academically, have fewer health problems, and adapt better both socially and emotionally.

However, to appreciate fully the benefits, Madam Speaker, one simply has to speak with the parents of these outstanding young students. In Iowa's Second District, which I am proud to represent, I have been lucky enough to visit a number of Head Start locations, and I have received letters from the parents of a number of these students. One of these letters was from Trina Thompson, a single, hardworking parent of two. Her youngest child attends Head Start in Iowa City, where she shared with me that "The staff and the program itself at Head Start are invaluable to my family and many others. It is a well-run program that has been vitally beneficial to my daughter and my family." Ms. Thompson went on to say, "I can go to work every day secure in the knowledge that my daughter is safe in a positive learning environment with amazing people." Ms. Thompson is not alone in her praise of these critical programs and the outstanding educators and child care providers.

The photo behind me today is a photo of one of these exceptional providers. Kelly Mathews of Iowa City is pictured here with children at the child care center she runs in Iowa. Ms. Mathews works 50 hours a week with the children at this center. Then she spends additional time filling out paperwork, completing continuing education credits, shopping for supplies, and creating a challenging and exciting curriculum for the children under her care. Ms. Mathews does all this for one clear reason: "to change the world." But we know this goal isn't easy, especially when Ms. Mathews is receiving a very modest salary with no benefits and no paid time off. We must do better for Ms. Mathews, better for all the child care providers and Head Start teachers, better for the children in Iowa and across the country, and better for hard-working families.

Unfortunately, this year the President failed to stand up for our country's children. He failed to prioritize their needs, forgetting that these children are the key to our country's future success. This year the President proposes flat funding for child care that will cause 200,000 children to lose access to child care assistance by 2009. The administration also acknowledges that fewer children will be served in

Head Start under their proposal. Should these cuts be implemented, the Kelly Mathews of the world will find it even more difficult to make ends meet, and the Trina Thompsons and their young children will find it next to impossible to secure a spot at their local Head Start. And this is simply not acceptable.

I urge all of my colleagues to take a moment this week in honor of the Week of the Young Child to think about the tens of thousands of children you represent that could be provided a wealth of opportunity and hope in their lives if we simply reject the President's budget proposal and choose to invest in the future and well-being of our children.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is April 15, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand—just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11th, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,867 days since the travesty called *Roe v. Wade* was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of our own children.

Some of them, Madam Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over their vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common.

They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Madam Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and

endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet Madam Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should have given them.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude, in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,867 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Madam Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is April 15, 2008—12,867 days since *Roe v. Wade* first stained the foundation of this nation with the blood of its own children—this, in the land of free and the home of the brave.

THE U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise to express concern about an action taken by this House this past week, and let me begin by asking this House who is America's best friend in Latin America?

Well, the answer is pretty loud and clear, and that is America's best friend in Latin America is the democratic Republic of Colombia, a nation of 42 million people, the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, a nation which is recognized throughout Latin America and, frankly, throughout the world as United States' most reliable partner in counterterrorism, United States' most reliable partner in counternarcotics. It's the Republic of Colombia.

Well, this passed week the House of Representatives, the Democratic majority, which controls it, voted to turn its back, this Congress's back, on our

most reliable partner in Latin America, sending a terrible signal to all of Latin America that if you are a good friend of the United States, you're not very important and you're not a very big priority, and when we have an agreement, we'll ignore it.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a trade promotion agreement with Colombia and the United States. It's a good agreement. Why is it a good agreement? Because it's a win-win-win for Illinois workers, Illinois farmers, Illinois manufacturers. The majority of this House, an overwhelming bipartisan majority of this House, voted earlier this past year to pass trade preferences for the Andean region, for countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. And what the trade preferences do is allow all the products that come in from Colombia that enter the United States duty free, no taxes, no tariffs. So agricultural products and manufactured goods made in Colombia and produced in Colombia enter the United States duty free. However, without the trade promotion agreement, products made in Illinois by Illinois workers or farm goods like corn and soybeans produced by Illinois farmers and, of course, manufacturers and workers all suffer taxes or tariffs on U.S.- and Illinois-made goods exported to Colombia.

We have often heard from constituents that say trade's important in Illinois and it just doesn't seem right when one country's products come into the United States duty free but we don't get reciprocity. And the U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement gives us that reciprocity. In fact, farm organizations will tell you that the U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement is the best ever negotiated to give U.S. farmers and growers and producers access to a foreign market. And when it comes to manufactured goods, 85 percent of the manufactured goods exported to Colombia would be duty free immediately.

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In my district, I have 8,000 constituents, union members, who work for a company which makes the yellow bulldozers and yellow construction equipment. Right now, those bulldozers made in America suffer a 15 percent tariff, which means the cost of that product is 15 percent more, making Illinois-manufactured construction equipment, like bulldozers and mining trucks, 15 percent more expensive but also less competitive with Asian competition.

We need this trade promotion agreement. And we need to have that brought to the floor for an up-or-down vote. Because I believe if it is brought to the floor for an up-or-down vote, the majority of this House would agree that we need to continue to expand our markets overseas for Illinois-manufactured goods and Illinois farm products as well as American farm products and American manufactured goods. It is a good agreement.