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Shaun F. O'Malley, Chairman Emeritus, Price Waterhouse, LLP.

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MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I bring a message from the American people. They don't like us. They viewed Congress as a body that's comprised of individuals that they elect and expect to reason together in the best interests of America and Americans. They don't see that happening. They insist they have had it with the politics itself and party.

Americans are hurting because of fuel costs which are pushing up all other costs, including food. Winter is approaching, and the pain will grow much worse.

This crisis is seriously threatening our national security. We are sending more money to foreign nations than ever before, many of whom don't like us, to put it mildly. We, in government, refused to get our financial House in order. We are forcing our Nation to depend on foreign oil.

Oh, and in an aside, emptying our Strategic Petroleum Reserve is not a solution. What if we are attacked, disaster? That's why reserves are called strategic. Politicians since, and including Jimmy Carter, have promised energy solutions.

Well, where are they? Under Carter we imported about 24 percent of our oil, and now we import about 70 percent. The American people are tired of hollow promises. They are demanding action now, now, not after the election, now. They demand plans for eliminating our dependence on oil, beginning with foreign oil, plans to use our own resource from offshore drilling to sugar cane conversion, all the while putting advanced batteries, hybrids, plug-in hybrids, wind, solar, hydrogen, nuclear and any other realistic alternative on a critical fast track.

Of course, we must do everything we can to protect our environment if for no other reason than we all must breathe clean air, consume safe food and water, and, of course, protect God's creatures.

The people know it's their government, and they intend to take charge.

Simply put, they are mad. Those before us, as well as many selfless heroes today, have and are now paying grievously. For this great opportunity that we call home, this America, the American people worked very hard to keep our Nation strong and productive. They do their jobs. The very least we can do as U.S. Congress is do our job.

OPTIMISM

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today on a lighter note, I would like to talk about optimism and the wherewithal that our country has, especially among our young people. I want to talk about a subject that doesn't really get a lot of attention in this whole debate about energy and oil and the fact that we are now faced with skyrocketing prices at the gas pump.

I want to talk about investing in our future. I want to talk about young people not only from my district but across the country, and I want to talk about what we call green jobs, green-collar jobs. Some people might think that's a misnomer, you know, but we have actually changed. Blue-collar jobs have, as you know, been outsourced to other countries.

What we are attempting to do in the Congress and something that President Bush signed into law just last December was an act that was part of the energy bill, the energy package, that said we are going to make a difference in this country by investing in America's future. We will provide 10 million jobs in green technology if our government steps up to the plate.

Now we are asking for that appropriation for \$125 million to help create, and, I think, minimally, 10 million jobs, that will be reaped across this country that will secure our energy security here at home. It will also send a steep message to many nonbelievers across the country that we mean business, that we are actually going to keep these jobs here, that these jobs won't be outsourced, that they won't be going to China and India and Indonesia and even to Mexico, because we are going to make an investment here.

It's, very simply, trying to set a precedent here to provide opportunities for people to get retrained or to get into new technology, into are renewable energy, into biofuels, and into creating solar panels. Those manufacturing jobs that we knew as blue-collar workers that my father as a teamster and other people in my district represented, could be retooled to help provide and incentivize our economy by keeping those jobs here at home.

No more of this minimum-wage jobs, but providing good, sustainable, liveable-wage jobs for working men and women and people that could rely on this to raise a family, not in the state that we are in right now, where you

have a single head of household, a woman, in many cases, that's working three jobs just to make that rent, just to make that electricity bill, just to get that extra gallon of gas to get to her job. Those are things that we know are resonating right now with our constituents, and they demand a change.

It isn't just enough to say that we are going to lower the energy costs, they have to have a good-paying job to provide for all those commodities, luxuries that they need to keep their family going.

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And one best way of doing it is by jump-starting the economy and by supporting the Green Jobs Act, something that the Senate and also the House passed again that was signed into law in December. We need \$125 million to help jump-start that program.

I want to illustrate something here, a picture of some youngsters who were actually installing on a roof, who had just completed a project in Oakland, California, who were trained in a program, who went through an apprenticeship program that was done in a private and public partnership. It was to help install solar panels and to retrofit them in some of our oldest buildings in very dilapidated parts of our country.

What an incentive that would be to help to jump-start our communities and to revitalize those communities that have been left behind by the manufacturing jobs that went to other countries but also to incentivize those places that have high unemployment like in Oakland, like in East Los Angeles, like in the Bronx, like in Little Havana in Florida. These places need relief, and the government has an obligation to help provide an incentive, working closely, hand in hand, with private industry.

The reason I say that is that I know it works, and it's working right now in an obscure place in my district in East Los Angeles. The LA Unified School District, which doesn't always get honors for many things that they do, has invested in a program out of the East LA Skills Center to help retrain individuals. The majority of those who are participating right now happen to be middle-aged people who are saying, "I need to get retrained into a better paying job, a job that's going to help me in the rest of my life and in my retirement." They're taking that challenge; they're going through training, and they're being offered jobs.

One of the dilemmas that we're facing right now is that we don't have an adequate workforce available to fill all of these potential jobs. I say: Why? Why should we go outside and bring people in when we need to make those investments here in the United States and in Los Angeles?

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say and would like to urge my colleagues to support the Green Jobs Act and to provide that infusion of \$125 million that will act as a stimulus package for our economy.

NEW TRENDS IN THE GROWING AFGHAN DRUG ECONOMY

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, with the increasing number of cross-border attacks in Afghanistan that are coming from the Waziristan region of Pakistan, it is more important than ever to develop a complete picture of where al Qaeda and the Taliban terrorists are hiding and especially of how they are funded.

Last month, the Defense Department finally recognized what many of us in the Congress have been saying for years. The report states: "Narcotics-related activities are fueling the insurgency in Afghanistan and, if left unchecked, threaten the long-term stability of the country and the surrounding region." It continues: "The emerging nexus between narcotics traffickers and the insurgency is clear. Narcotics traffickers provide revenue and arms to the Taliban while the Taliban provides protection to growers and traffickers and keep the government from interfering with their activities." In short, the Taliban has become a fully functioning, South Asian narco-terrorist organization, protecting the source of 92 percent of the world's opium.

Production is so high now that the price is dropping after years of record crops. Never one to ignore market forces, Afghan drug kingpins are now expanding into new illicit markets, and they have become the major supplier of the global cannabis and hashish markets.

Now, Morocco used to be the traditional main source for hashish in the world, but that is rapidly changing. Morocco has been marginalized in favor of Afghanistan. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Morocco used to be the source of 31 percent of the world's hashish, but by 2006, the number dwindled to just 18 percent.

In contrast, the U.N. now reports that cannabis cultivation in Afghanistan has more than doubled since 2004. In 2004, 30,000 hectares were under cultivation. In 2007, that number had risen to 70,000, much of which is protected and nurtured by the Taliban as their new source of income.

U.N. figures also show that cannabis cultivation is surging in Taliban strongholds, including in the Kandahar, Uruzgan, Paktika, Zabol, and Helmand Provinces. If the Great Plains are the breadbasket of America, then these Afghan Provinces make up the production heartland of the international narcotics trade.

The U.N. report also notes that, in these southern provinces, all of the farmers growing poppy and now cannabis pay taxes of, roughly, 10 percent of revenues to antigovernment elements, including to the Taliban and to al Qaeda. Taliban presence is highest in

the provinces with the greatest drug production, and violence follows wherever the Taliban is present.

In the heroin heartland of the Helmand Province, the bloodshed is dramatically higher than in all other Afghan provinces. Militants launch an attack every 32 hours in Helmand, compared to just one attack every 3 or 4 days in the rest of the country or just one attack a week in Kabul.

The shift demonstrates that it's time for the United States and for our NATO allies to take a stronger stand against the narcotics trade of Afghanistan. Even the Defense Department now acknowledges a clear link between drug trafficking and terrorist financing, a concept that used to be very controversial in Afghanistan, but that is now clear.

Of course, in Colombia, we learned that drugs and terrorism must be fought simultaneously. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, we must take the lessons learned in Colombia to understand that counterterrorism programs will not work unless there is also an effective counternarcotics program to eliminate the Taliban's source of money.

Mr. Speaker, while partisan feelings in the House surround the mission in Iraq, the challenges of the Afghan mission are overshadowed. The Afghan war is sometimes described as the "good war" or as the "bipartisan war" or as the "war that our allies support." It is certainly true that our forces in Afghanistan enjoy stronger support from the American people and from our allies overseas. While we have a NATO command in Afghanistan, our strong allied support for this mission should not blind us to the growing problems and dangers emerging for our troops.

The reality is this: Heroin has financed the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and they have now found a new source of money—hashish and cannabis—which provide, in our estimate, hundreds of millions of dollars to finance terror. The lessons of FARC's decline in Colombia are clear: To wipe out terror, you have to attack its income. In both Colombia and Afghanistan, that income comes from narcotics.

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

(Mr. SKELTON 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 Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE 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 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 California (Mr. CALVERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CALVERT 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 North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY 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. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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 New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

ENERGY

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

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are going to do something a little bit differently this evening on the House floor. We have a 1-hour Special Order of the minority and a 1-hour Special Order of the majority. The minority leader and the Speaker have agreed to combine those two Special Orders so that both sides can participate in the debate about energy policy. I will be leading the minority side, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.