

Defense Cooperation Agreement will further strengthen that alliance and will serve as a major boost to our joint efforts to fight narco-traffickers and leftist rebels.

In discussing this agreement last month, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highlighted, "This agreement ensures that appropriate protections are in place for our servicemembers. It will allow us to continue working together to meet the challenges posed by narco-traffickers, terrorists, and other illegal armed groups in Colombia."

Together, the U.S. and Colombia have had enormous success in battling those groups, but much more remains to be done. This agreement will ensure that we are fully equipped to do so.

The United States and Colombia also share growing economic ties. The U.S. is the largest source of foreign investment in Colombia, which has quadrupled over the past 7 years. My own district in Miami, Florida, had nearly \$6 billion in total trade with Colombia in 1 year alone.

Colombia is Miami's number one trading partner in volume and second leading international market. But although U.S.-Colombian economic ties are strong, we have only just begun to tap their potential. That will require passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Unfortunately, the free trade agreement has been in limbo for 3 years, largely because of partisan opposition. But opponents fail to understand that the primary purpose of this trade pact is to eliminate Colombia's barriers to U.S. goods. Colombia would immediately eliminate a majority of its tariffs on U.S. exports, with all remaining tariffs eventually phasing out gradually. More exports means more sales, which means more jobs here in the U.S. The benefits would be felt immediately.

The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that U.S. exports to Colombia would quickly increase by over \$1 billion, and that's not even counting a major increase in service-related exports.

Given today's difficult economic climate, with so many hardworking Americans striving to make ends meet, it is unbelievable that Congress continues to refuse to take the simple step to expand trade and create jobs in this country.

But there is more at stake, Mr. Speaker. By strengthening Colombia's ability to fight drug traffickers and fight leftist guerrillas, and by demonstrating that the U.S. will stand by its loyal ally, passage of this trade agreement will advance U.S. security and economic interests not only in that country, but throughout the hemisphere. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to approve the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and to do so as soon as possible.

Again, I would like to commend the people of Colombia for their remarkable progress that they have achieved

and express my ongoing support for the strong ties between our countries. We are blessed in south Florida to have a wonderful, robust, patriotic, American-loving, Colombian-American community. They have, indeed, enriched our area.

DEMOCRATS' PLANS TO REFORM HEALTH CARE

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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the Democrats' plans to "reform" our health care system.

You know, many promises have been made by the other side of the aisle about what these reforms would actually do, but now we actually have a definitive analysis, performed by the chief government actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to look at the consequences of these reforms. Well, Mr. Speaker, the diagnosis is not that good.

Both the President and his economic advisors have said that whatever bill the President signs he wants to make sure that he bends the cost curve. Well, how does the Democrat health care stack up to that pledge?

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According to that chief actuary whom I just mentioned, total spending on health care would actually increase by \$750 billion more than if we did nothing at all. That's right. The Democrats' plan would bend the cost curve all right, but it would bend it in the wrong direction. You see, the real overall cost of this bill would be \$1.2 trillion. That's with a T. By 2019, the annual cost of the entitlement expansion would be \$236 billion, and that would be rising at an annual rate of 9 percent every year. After all of this spending, there would still be around 20-some-odd million uninsured Americans. So, for those folks who are trying to keep score of all of this, that comes out to be about \$35,000 per uninsured person out there.

Now, another promise that the President made was that he said, "if you like your current coverage, you keep it." Well, again, look back to that government actuary whom we talked about before. According to that chief actuary, that's not true if you're a senior on Medicare, because 8.5 million seniors on Medicare today would lose their current coverage, and they would be forced into some different coverage.

Also contained in the bill are what we call arbitrary, across-the-board payment cuts to hospitals, to nursing homes and to home health agencies. Again, let's see what the chief actuary says. The chief actuary says the cuts could force such organizations, such as nursing homes and home health agencies, to leave the Medicare program and, thus, "possibly jeopardizing access

to care for beneficiaries." That doesn't really sound like keeping the coverage you want, does it?

So maybe now, finally, the Democrat leadership in Congress will start to listen to at least a few of the ideas put forward by the Republicans. What we want to do is try to increase the access to health care coverage, to increase access to the health care delivery system and to make insurance more portable and affordable. What we want to do is try to reduce those long-term spending plans and to reduce the curve downward in order to bring down the cost of medical liability and to create a sustainable health care system.

Finally, at the end of the day, Republicans stand today, as we have always in the past, ready to work with the Democrats to enact real reform to our health care delivery system as soon as they are ready to work with us.

UNCLE SAM IS GOING BROKE

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, this is a poster of Uncle Sam going broke. America is going broke, and we are taking away the future economic security of our children, grandchildren and of everyone listening.

The national debt is racing toward \$12 trillion, and it is growing at rates that haven't been matched since World War II. It will double over the next 10 years.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, hit the nail on the head in this week's National Journal when she said, "It's like fiscal jenga, where people are piling on more and more debt, and finally, something's going to be the cause of it collapsing, but no one believes their thing is going to be the tipping point."

Why is this Congress, Mr. Speaker, willing to keep piling on the debt? Why are we turning a blind eye toward our children and grandchildren?

The FY 2009 fiscal year ending September 30 registered a \$1.4 trillion deficit, leaving red ink as far as the eye can see, and leaving trillion dollar deficits as far as the eye can see. Medicare and Social Security add up to a massive \$57 trillion in promises Uncle Sam has made but can't keep.

Make no mistake. Unsustainable spending has far-reaching implications for the United States. It touches every sector from health care to job creation, and it gives the foreign investors who hold America's debt more control.

What is this administration doing? Is Congress prepared to let America sink? How can this Congress stand by record joblessness that is almost reaching 10 percent? Does Congress care?

Our manufacturing base is crumbling. The state of the dollar is falling. Foreign lenders own nearly 40 percent of our domestic economy, and China

and Saudi Arabia have now become our bankers. If lawmakers in this body were serious about the debt and about the deficit issues that Americans are increasingly worried about, Congress would have an honest conversation and would do something about it.

In June of 2006, they stood in the same place, and spoke about the introduction of a bill called the SAFE Commission Act. They explained that the country is having trouble. It's a bipartisan commission, and it puts every spending program on. It comes back and requires—it requires, Mr. Speaker—that Congress vote up or down. In a bipartisan manner, Congressman COOPER and I have had this bill in now for 3 years.

I have little faith that this Congress will act through regular order and will tackle this enormous, growing problem. It will take this approach: Instead of dealing with these issues, Congress will ignore them.

In closing, it reminds me of the Simon and Garfunkel song, which they sang in Central Park, called "The Boxer." It says: Man hears what he wants to hear, and disregards the rest. I would change the words to say: Congress hears only what it wants to hear, and disregards the rest.

Therefore, this Congress is allowing Uncle Sam to go broke. It is time for us to deal with it in a bipartisan way for the good of our children, for the good of our grandchildren and for the good of everyone who lives in this country.

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 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 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 Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

MOVING GUANTANAMO DETAINEES TO U.S. SOIL AND CONGRESSIONAL TRANSPARENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2009, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank the Speaker for the recognition.

Yesterday was a very interesting day in an open hearing in the Intelligence Committee. It's something that doesn't happen very often. We had the opportunity to hear from a small business person from Standish, Michigan—Dave Munson. The hearing was about congressional notification.

When is it the requirement of the executive branch, of the President and of the executive agencies, to fully brief Congress in a timely manner on the actions that they are taking?

The law is fairly clear. Congress needs to be fully and currently informed of intelligence matters.

So why would David Munson, a small business man from a small town in northern Michigan, be testifying in front of the Intelligence Committee?

David Munson is asking that this Congress, that the Michigan legislature, that the city council in Standish, and that the citizens of Standish, Michigan be fully and completely informed and be on a timely basis informed on what this administration's policies are for moving Guantanamo prisoners to the United States.

On January 22, the President made a statement that he now is finding is very, very difficult to finish. He promised that, within 12 months, the prison in Guantanamo would be closed and that the Gitmo detainees would be moved somewhere else, either overseas or perhaps to the United States. Many of us who have been working on this issue for years recognized how ill-advised the President's statement could be.

President Bush had said that he wanted Guantanamo closed, and as he started taking a look at how he would make it happen, he found out it was very, very difficult to do. He diminished the number of detainees in Gitmo, but he wasn't able to close it completely. President Obama, really with no analysis, said he would close it in 12 months. He has now found out how difficult that is.

Other countries don't want to take these detainees. They don't want to take them into their countries. We don't want them in the United States. As soon as they move from Cuba to the United States, they get a whole new set of legal rights and legal authorities. So why would we want to do that for some of the most dangerous people in the world? Yet the President seems committed to moving these people to the United States.

One of the sites that he is supposedly investigating, or that the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice are considering, is a closed corrections facility in Standish, Michigan. The Department of Defense has been there. Mr. Munson believes that some of the elected officials in the commu-

nity are having ongoing discussions with the Department of Defense about moving these detainees, these prisoners, to the State of Michigan even though the community is opposed.

Just like most of Michigan, this is a community that is hurting. We've got a 15.3 percent unemployment rate—the highest unemployment rate in the country, so we need an economic stimulus; but what the people of that community have said is we don't need an al Qaeda stimulus in our community. If the President is considering moving these prisoners to Michigan, what they do want is transparency. They would like to know exactly what the status of the negotiations is.

Are there negotiations actually taking place? If there are, then they'd like to know: What's the impact on our community going to be? They'd like to have a better understanding.

As Mr. Munson said yesterday, exactly who are these individuals we're considering moving into our community? What are their backgrounds? Why are they being held in Gitmo? Why have we detained them for years? He would also like to know, as would other people in the community, if we've held these people in Gitmo for a number of years, what have we learned while we have held these people in detention? What kinds of risks and challenges might they pose to the people who are guarding them and to the community where they are housed? What has been our experience in holding al Qaeda and radical jihadists in prisons around the world? Have there been attempted prison breaks? Have there been attempted prison entries where people outside have targeted the communities where these facilities are held?

These are the kinds of questions that the people in Standish, Michigan and the people of Michigan want answers to. The people in Standish have asked for that information. The Michigan legislature has asked for transparency. I have asked for transparency as the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, but consistently, Secretary Gates and the Obama administration have replied with stone silence. They are totally unwilling to share any information with elected officials or with the citizens of Standish about what their plans and intentions may or may not be.

For an administration that said we are going to be transparent, to have a hearing in the Intelligence Committee where we're saying we want to talk about transparency and about what some would say is a lack of transparency by the previous administration and now by this administration and about keeping Congress fully and completely informed on a timely basis, it was the perfect hearing in which to have that discussion.

What David Munson clearly articulated is that people in Michigan and people in Standish are concerned, and they want answers. This administration has been unwilling to keep the