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It is part of the public record that a suitcase of Chavez-cash heading to Mrs. Kirchner in Argentina was accidentally intercepted by authorities before reaching its intended destination.

Castro has purchased advocates through the years via the always present threat of blackmail after trips to totalitarian Cuba where the regime tapes visitors in "compromising" situations, as confirmed by Interior Ministry defector Roberto Hernandez del Llano and Cuban Counter-Intelligence defector Major Roberto Ortega.

Castro also serves as a "banker" for illicit money possessed by those who seek to avoid detection by the anti-laundering mechanisms set up by the international community. It matters not if the money's source is political corruption or narco-trafficking.

Hugo Chavez's absolute dependency on Fidel Castro for every major decision, even for his phrases and gestures in international forums, is unprecedented. While the Soviet Union used to send Castro economic aid and also orders and instructions, Chavez sends Castro billions of dollars and receives orders from him.

What the world witnessed at this last weekend's Summit of the Americas was a culmination of years of preparation in the purchase and cultivation of advocates by Fidel Castro. The goal of the advocates: mass American tourism with its billions of dollars a year and U.S. trade financing, so that the U.S. taxpayer ultimately bails out and bankrolls Fidel Castro.

Castro's advocates know very well that article III of the Charter of the Organization of American States requires the existence of representative democracy in all the countries of our hemisphere, and that the Inter-American Democratic Charter of 2001 even spells out the collective steps to be taken when an American republic's democracy is usurped.

They know that Cuba, under Castro, was the only country in our hemisphere where free elections have not been held in over 50 years, and where dungeons are full of nonviolent political prisoners. They know that under Castro, Cuba is a personal island-estate, a ranch, a personal land holding or homestead, a totalitarian fiefdom, owned by one man, with a brother who enjoys the title of head of state and carefully carries out his brother's orders.

Any goods the people on the island purchase must be purchased in the island fiefdom's "company stores" and with worthless "vouchers" called "convertible pesos" sold by the regime. Castro takes 30 percent of all hard currency "off the top" at the time island residents purchase the "vouchers," and all hard currency must be spent with purchased "vouchers" in his "company stores."

The inducement for child prostitution on the island-fiefdom is unparalleled in the world, because no matter

how hard island residents work, only foreign "hard" currency allows them to purchase the "vouchers," the "convertible pesos," for use in the stores that sell everything, from food to clothes to soap to toothpaste.

Equally, only foreign "hard" currency allows residents to purchase medicines. The shelves in the old stores and pharmacies where residents used to be able to purchase Soviet-bloc supplies with their ration cards are simply empty since there is no money to be made there by the dictator.

The Castro advocates at the weekend "Summit" knew all this, like when Mrs. Kirchner called for the U.S. to make amends with "our sister republic, Cuba." Or when Mr. Ortega condemned the U.S. for organizing the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Somehow they knew that President Obama would refer to Castro's totalitarian fiefdom as "Cuba." Somehow they knew that President Obama would not respond to Mr. Ortega that at the Bay of Pigs, Cubans bravely fought to spare their country half a century of totalitarian oppression. President Obama said, "I'm grateful President Ortega did not blame me for things that happened when I was 3 months old." Somehow they knew President Obama would not make clear that, as per U.S. law, the U.S. embargo will go away when all of Castro's political prisoners are freed and when there is freedom of expression and multi-party elections scheduled in Cuba. Of course they knew. President Obama had just unilaterally granted the fiefdom's owner hundreds of millions of dollars a year, in exchange for nothing.

A LITTLE BIT OF OPTIMISM ABOUT OUR ECONOMY

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

Mr. INGLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to report on a telephone conversation that I had and actually then an in-person conversation I had with a fellow who was talking to me about his great concern about the economy. And of course, I started the conversation by saying, yes, I share that concern. But he could tell that I had a little bit of optimism about where we are. And he asked why? How could you be optimistic? And I told him two reasons to be optimistic that are immediately apparent with the economy, I think. One is, you know, crisis creates opportunity to fix things. And it could be that we can use this current financial problem that we've got and the incredible spending that we're doing here in Washington, to finally focus on change to the crucial programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Until we're talking those programs, we're not talking balancing the budget.

But in the midst of the crisis created by our wild spending, perhaps we can bring our attention to the underlying

problem, the problem that's not new, that's been going on in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. So that's one reason for optimism.

Another, I told him, is that really we've got an incredible opportunity to grow our way out of this current problem by solving the energy challenge. If we address the energy security question, we can grow out of this problem.

You know, I was here in the Congress during the nineties and served on the Budget Committee. Part of our balancing act in getting to balance in 1999 and 2000 was fiscal restraint, and that's because of Republicans taking control of the House and having some fiscal restraint.

But it's also true that what was really happening is there was a massive expansion of the economy because of the tech boom. Because of the advances in PCs and the Internet, the productivity that came with those, and, therefore, growth without inflation, we were able to expand our economy. That economy threw off revenue to the Federal Government and, as a result, we reached balance.

Now we have an opportunity to do the same thing, just energy being the next step up in a plateau of economic development. We climbed up onto the plateau of the tech boom. Now we've got the opportunity to climb up onto another high plateau of energy security. If we do that successfully, I believe that we can generate economic growth that will, in turn, generate revenues for this Federal Government. And the result is that we will, once again, balance the budget if we pursue fiscal restraint in coming out of this crisis, together with economic growth that will come from addressing our energy security challenge.

Mr. Speaker, in the weeks and months to come, I hope to speak more about a very specific proposal that can do just that, with an elegant price signal sent throughout our economy about new energy technologies; and with that price signal, I think we can get about solving this fiscal problem by economic growth and, of course, also addressing the underlying problem of out-of-control entitlement spending that needs to be brought under control.

So, Mr. Speaker, tough times; but it's also true there's every reason to be optimistic.

PRAYER CAUCUS

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

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last few weeks, President Obama made the statement while in a foreign country that we are not a Christian Nation, that we are not a Jewish Nation or a Muslim Nation. He said we are citizens with shared values.

Upon President Obama's return to the United States, he went to Georgetown University, a great Catholic

school of higher learning. His staff, it is reported, requested that the Catholic university cover up the image of Christ on the cross before President Obama would give his speech at Georgetown. I don't know that any previous President, Mr. Speaker, has ever made such a request.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if President Abraham Lincoln, one of President Obama's heroes, would have said overseas that he believed America was a Nation of secularists, or would President Abraham Lincoln have said, America is a Nation which tolerates all faiths, but which is populated primarily by Christians.

President Lincoln felt quite differently than President Obama. Rather than proclaiming the United States a Nation of secularists, President Lincoln warned the people of America to not forget God. In fact, it was on May 30, 1863, that President Abraham Lincoln said, as part of his proclamation for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own . . . It behooves us then," said President Lincoln, "to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

And, Mr. Speaker, likewise, as President Obama insisted a Catholic university cover the image of Christ during the Easter season while he spoke at that school, George Washington, our first President, demonstrated that he was not offended by the image of the risen Christ. In fact, our Nation's first President let his views be known quite clearly on his inauguration by a prayer which George Washington himself gave at his inauguration. He said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally, that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Mr. Speaker, our first President, George Washington, insisted on his inauguration day as the first President of this great country, that unless the citizens of our country imitate the example of Jesus Christ, that we would not be a happy Nation. What a clear contrast between our first President and our current President.

And with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I think it's so important, on behalf of the Prayer Caucus of this Congress that, as the National Day of Prayer approaches, that all American citizens do what our first President prayed in his inaugural prayer, and what President Lincoln prayed as well in his address and in his proclamation, that we would do well to imitate the life and example of Jesus Christ, and we would do well to humbly not forget God, but to humble ourselves before an Almighty God and not expect that it is we ourselves that have created these blessings for our country, but that it is a gracious heavenly God who holds our Nation in His hands.

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.)

CAP-AND-TRADE LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight with an issue of enormous importance before the American people on my mind. And I'll be joined in just a few moments by distinguished colleagues from around the country who share my profound concern about legislation that has come to be known as cap-and-trade legislation. It is an effort that is under way here on Capitol Hill and from the Obama administration that could well result in an increase in energy cost for the average American household of more than \$3,000 per year.

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Now we want to talk about the facts and the data here because, even in newspapers and in wire services tonight, that number, which is the calculation of a study done by MIT, is the subject of some dispute and of some debate. I want to concede the point that the impact on the average American household, if the President and the majority's cap-and-trade bill were to become law, could actually be much higher than that. In fact, it would be President Obama, himself, as a candidate in January 2008, who spoke these words in a meeting with the editorial board of the San Francisco Chronicle, and I

would say to any of our citizens who are looking in and who are Internet savvy: Don't take my word for it. Go to youtube.com and type in the President's name and the San Francisco Chronicle, and you can watch him say it for yourself.

I give the President, whose office and his person I respect, credit for candor. In January of 2008, he referred to this plan upon which he was campaigning and a plan upon which Democrats have now offered legislation, hearings for which begin this week.

The President said, "Under my plan of a cap-and-trade system, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket." Adding, "That would cost money, and they will pass that money on to consumers."

Let me say again: While a careful calculation of a study done, I believe, in 2007 by a distinguished university, MIT, estimates that the average American household would experience increased energy costs of some \$3,128 per year, then candidate and now-President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, said that, if his cap-and-trade system passed into law, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.

Now, the last time I checked, which was just late last week, most of this country was going through one of the worst recessions we've experienced in decades. I say with a heavy heart that the people of Indiana recently learned that the unemployment rate in my fair State is now at 10 percent. The American people are hurting, struggling under the weight of the listing economic fortunes of this Nation. Let me say that the last thing, I believe, the American people want this Congress to do is to pass energy legislation in the name of dealing with climate change that could result in, to borrow the President's phrase, a skyrocketing of electricity rates on working families, small business owners and family farms.

As I prepare to begin to recognize some of my colleagues, many of whom have gotten to know more about this topic than I will have a chance to learn, I also want to make one more point about this: This legislation, known as the American Clean Energy and Security Act, offered on March 31, 2009, by House Energy and Commerce Chairman WAXMAN of California and by the Energy and Environment Subcommittee Chairman MARKEY, could not only result in this massive energy tax increase, but I want to say, if this legislation were to pass into law, it would be tantamount to a declaration of economic war on the Midwest by the liberal majority of this Congress.

Now, people who have known me over the last 8 years in this Congress know that I like to turn a phrase, but I don't like to be an alarmist, and so, for me to come to the floor of this Congress and say that I believe if the President's cap-and-trade bill were to become law it would, in effect, be a declaration of