

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, while my statement mimics a well-known seasonal classic, it is shared in all seriousness and with a sense of greatest urgency.

'Twas the week before Christmas when all through the House,

A cry echoed much louder than a roaring mouse.

Don't raise our taxes, on us please be fair,

or our middle class will be lost in despair.

The majority was plotting a thought in its head,

We should staunchly oppose what from the President was led.

Millionaires should be spared, not a penny we sap,

But Keystone pipeline we will never ever scrap.

When outside the Chamber there arose such a clatter,

The public was disgusted and shouted: we matter!

Away to offices lawmakers flew in a flash,

A change in this bill or else it will crash.

End of year coming and no jobs plan to show,

They said no regulations was the best way to go.

Then what to our debate should suddenly appear,

But a sentiment from the public those in office should fear.

Come on Congress, be fair and be quick.

Don't be deceiving, and don't be so slick.

More rapid the calls and emails they came,

"No pipeline" said Senator I won't name.

So let's get to work and not be grinch this season,

The economy and middle class are clearly the reason,

We should have a straight vote, not this 400-page show,

And help America's middle class and small business grow.

Let's spring into action and get this bill done.

We have other work; in fact, there's a ton.

Spending bills, doc fix, unemployment and more,

Before the year ends, they must all come to the floor.

We serve our constituents and our Nation first.

For jobs and opportunities, many of us thirst.

Clean air and clean water should not be rolled back.

Deregulatory riders ours bills should well lack.

Thus we go forward to end of the year,

Good tidings and joy this Congress must steer.

Working together with all of our might,

Happy Holidays to all, and for fairness let's fight.

GENOCIDAL SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HIRES LOBBYIST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I was appalled and outraged to learn yesterday that the genocidal government of Khartoum has hired a lobbyist to represent its interests here in Washington.

On December 10, a publication called "Africa Intelligence" reported that the Sudanese Government has put a lobbyist on retainer with the express purpose of trying "to lift American sanctions against it."

The article further reported that the law office of Bart S. Fisher would be paid \$20,000 a month plus expenses to represent this genocidal government, a government which literally has blood on its hands.

I don't know how Mr. Fisher sleeps at night. Considering the follow: Sudan's president, Omar Hassan Bashir, is an internationally indicted war criminal. Bashir is accused by the International Criminal Court of five counts of crimes against humanity—including murder, rape, torture, and extermination—and two counts of war crimes.

But Khartoum's crimes are not simply a thing of the past. In a recent hearing before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a witness with the NGO Human Rights Watch testified about the situation on the ground in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in Sudan, saying: "According to witnesses we interviewed and other sources, government forces shelled civilian areas, shot people in the streets and carried out house-to-house searches and arrests based on lists of names of known Sudan People's Liberation Movement supporters in the first weeks of fighting."

My office has received regular, reliable reports from individuals on the ground echoing these claims. We have learned of ongoing aerial bombardments in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states. We have heard of nightmarish accounts of extrajudicial killings, illegal detention, disappearances, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. Furthermore, evidence gathered through satellite imagery by the Satellite Sentinel Project shows at least eight mass graves found in and around Kadugli, the capital of Southern Kordofan.

Literally thousands have fled the violence, which begs the question, Who is their lobbyist? They are in desperate straits having left behind their entire lives. Who is their lobbyist? They are facing malnutrition and prolonged displacement. Who is their lobbyist?

To put a human face on these questions, consider this picture taken by a Voice of America photographer of a malnourished child with a feeding tube inserted in his nose in an attempt to get him the sustenance he so desperately needs. He is one of roughly 25,000 people in the Yida refugee camp that have fled the fighting in Sudan and crossed the border in South Sudan.

I ask Mr. Fisher, the lobbyist: Where is the child's lobbyist, the lobbyist for this child?

Today I am sending a letter to President Obama, the State Department, the Justice Department, and the Treasury Department seeking immediate clarification on what appears to be an indefensible situation.

According to news report and the Foreign Agents Registration page of the Department of Justice Web site, Mr. Bart Fisher is representing the Government of Sudan. Was he granted a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control at Treasury, as is required to represent the genocidal country of Sudan given the U.S. sanctions which are in place against it? If not, is his representation a violation of law? If so, why would the Obama administration allow this to move forward?

There are many questions which demand answers. But one thing is clear: it appears that Mr. Fisher's contract with the Government of Sudan went into effect in November. If he has received one penny from the Government of Sudan, he should return it immediately; or better yet, he should donate it to one of the NGOs seeking to serve the suffering Sudanese people in Yida refugee camp who have been brutalized by their own government, i.e., Mr. Fisher's client.

[From the Africa Intelligence, Dec. 10, 2011]

KHARTOUM HIRES A LOBBYIST IN U.S.

The Sudanese government has just taken on a lobbyist in Washington, United States to try to lift American sanctions against it. The Law Office of Bart S. Fisher summarised the contract in a letter to the Sudanese embassy in Washington dated November 1, stating that its work would be carried out within the limits of the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations, for a fee of \$20,000 a month plus expenses. Bart Fisher is a longstanding lobbyist for China and for Chinese companies, combining the legal defence of its clients and lobby activity. In the case of Sudan, he will advise Khartoum on how to obtain the reduction or cessation of U.S. sanctions and the removal of the country from the State Department list of State Sponsors of Terror. It will also aid the Sudanese Embassy in Washington in the requisite legal procedures. Fisher will have work to do, since the contract was signed on 10 November just as military tension is growing on the border with Southern Sudan and a coalition of 66 organisations in the United States, Act for Sudan, recently asked President Barack Obama to impose a no fly zone over Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, to prevent Khartoum from attacking the civilian population.

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PAYROLL TAX CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, once again we are presented with a false choice today. In the Alice in Wonderland world of the House, Republicans oppose payroll tax cuts unless they can be used as a vehicle to cut unemployment benefits. According

to the majority, it isn't worth passing a simple payroll tax cut without eviscerating Americans' health care. In this warped, parallel universe, payroll tax cut extensions must be accompanied by gratuitous measures to punish Federal employees and civil servants like Border Security agents and FBI agents. And, of course, the majority seems singularly incapable of writing any bill, especially at this time of year, Christmas, that doesn't contain several special provisions to benefit the Koch Brothers and Big Oil giveaways.

Sadly, this bill is consistent with the Republican pattern of extortion on behalf of an extreme special interest agenda. After almost shutting down the government, furloughing FAA employees, and blocking the appointment of a director to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and other agencies, now, believe it or not, they are holding tax cuts hostage.

President Obama sent a simple legislative package to Congress: Extend the payroll tax cuts, saving the average American family \$1,500 a year. Extend unemployment insurance benefits to create 1 million jobs and add 1 full percentage of growth to the economy. This very proposal received a majority vote in the Senate but, of course, was blocked by a Republican filibuster. It did what the Republicans say they want to do—cut taxes and grow the economy. Too bad their actions don't match their words.

Based on their rhetoric, one would think that Republicans would support a simple tax cut. That is, after all, their solution to every economic challenge: Cut taxes, especially for millionaires and large corporations. Yet when presented with a simple tax cut bill targeted to help the middle class in America, Republicans rebel and reject it in favor of a piece of special-interest sausage so laden with lobbyist giveaways and ideological poison pills that it would make the author of "The Jungle," Upton Sinclair's, nose turn blue.

The bill before us today slashes unemployment benefits for Virginians in my home State by 38 percent, and it increases Federal employee pension contributions by 63 percent while reducing total pension payments. Federal employees, in other words, will pay more and get less retirement security after a lifetime of public service. For good measure, it extends public servants' pay freeze for a full 5 years. It contains a costly special interest policy rider that will increase oil exports to China and raise American gas prices. It repeals part of the Clean Air Act, allowing polluters to spew forth mercury, arsenic, and other toxic pollutants from industrial boilers. In fact, repeal of this Clean Air Act public health standard will burden the American economy with \$20 billion to \$52 billion in additional health care costs every year.

We must remember what a perilous state the economy is in. Thanks to the

successful Recovery Act and expansionary monetary policy, unemployment has fallen now to 8.6 percent. It would be 8.25 percent except for the fact that Republican policies have led to the loss of over a half-million public sector jobs throughout the United States. The number of underemployed and long-term unemployed Americans has fallen as people have found steady, full-time jobs, and private-sector job growth has been growing every month for 21 consecutive months. We're not out of the woods, but we are making progress.

The Congressional Budget Office, McCain campaign adviser Mark Zandi, and Barclays Bank all estimate that extending unemployment benefits will increase the economy by a full 1 percent and add 1 million jobs. That's because unemployment benefits have a multiplier effect—they are spent as soon as they are gotten. The payroll tax cut, in addition, will provide Americans with an average of \$1,500 per worker, creating some \$250 billion in economic activity and adding 1 full percentage point to the GDP.

The Speaker controls which bills come to the floor of the House. Let's junk this bill and come up with a clean payroll tax extension and unemployment benefits for all Americans, creating jobs and growing this economy.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, at the end of last week, I was able to take to the floor with some of my colleagues to talk about high-level nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain. Part of that time, I wanted to make sure, as I have each week, to highlight certain locations around this country where high-level nuclear waste is stored. Because of time constraints, I wasn't able to do that, so I take to the floor this morning to highlight a nuclear power plant in Florida called Turkey Point.

And the way I do this, Mr. Speaker, is I have this poster in front of me, and I compare the location of high-level nuclear waste at Turkey Point to the defined-by-law location for a single repository in this country, Yucca Mountain.

So look at what we have here. At Yucca Mountain, we have currently no nuclear waste on site. At Turkey Point, there's 1,074 metric tons of spent fuel on site. That's quite a lot of fuel. If we had waste stored at Yucca Mountain, the waste would be stored 1,000 feet underground—Yucca Mountain is a mountain. At Turkey Point, waste is stored above ground in pools. Now why is that an important point to consider? The nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the Fukushima Daiichi plant, part of the major disaster was because of high-level nuclear waste stored in pools. The earthquake occurred and either the water that was there boiled

out or there were cracks in the containment valve and it spilled out, and then the nuclear waste heated up, and hence you have a very dangerous situation still in Japan.

At Yucca Mountain, the waste would be stored 1,000 feet above the water table. But here, at Turkey Point, which is in Florida, the waste is on Biscayne Bay at sea level. So it is at sea level, not in a mountain in a desert.

What we've done also is look at if you are at Yucca Mountain how far are you away from really the largest body of water, which would be the Colorado River? Yucca Mountain is 100 miles from the Colorado River. Turkey Point and the nuclear waste stored there is 10 miles from the Everglades—10 miles from the Everglades.

So we passed—I wasn't a Member of this Chamber at this time—a Federal law called the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982. When we passed that law, we defined Yucca Mountain as the national repository—a single repository for not just nuclear waste from our nuclear power fleet, but also the nuclear waste from our Department of Energy locations from around the country.

Obviously, we are very close, but this administration, along with the NRC Commissioner, has delayed, postponed, and tried to stop any movement on Yucca Mountain. And that's why I take the floor. As the subcommittee chairman of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee, part of my jurisdiction is high-level nuclear waste, and that's why I come to the floor weekly to address this issue.

Now, this is very timely this week, as Chairman Jaczko and the NRC Commissioners are up here before our Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Chairman Jaczko, in an article dated September 7, said, "I welcome debate, I welcome discussion, I welcome criticism." But a letter sent to the Chief of Staff of the White House, Mr. Bill Daley, by the other four Commissioners, bipartisan—two Democrats, two Republicans, three appointed by the President—says this about Chairman Jaczko: He's intimidated and bullied senior career staff to the degree that he has created a high level of fear and anxiety resulting in a chilled work environment. They also say he ordered staff to withhold or modify policy information and recommendations intended for transmission to the Commission. He has also ignored the will of the majority of the Commission, contrary to the statutory functions of the Commission. And he has attempted to intimidate the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.

This is part of the problem of our not having a national policy to move high-level nuclear waste to a centralized location in a desert underneath a mountain, Yucca Mountain. We have Senators who have voted for that in this area. The two senators from Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama all support it.