

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight I wish to suggest eight more reasons to vote “no” on CAFTA.

First of all, CAFTA continues the failed neo-liberal trade regimen that puts freedom last rather than first. CAFTA assumes, like NAFTA before it, that trade will bring freedom. But where contingent liberties do not really exist, such flawed trade approaches bring not freedom but exploitation and hardship on the majority of the people struggling to get into the middle class.

A “no” vote on CAFTA will result in its renegotiation to expand liberty, opportunity, and hope. Respect and dignity for workers, fresh water, clean air, treated sewage are rights that should belong to every human being. Surely our continent, our hemisphere deserves better than CAFTA.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is that it will outsource more U.S. jobs and worsen our burgeoning trade deficit. NAFTA’s supporters promised us millions of jobs, as the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) has stated, as well as a trade surplus for our country. Exactly the opposite has happened.

The U.S. has lost over 1 million jobs to Mexico and Canada resulting from NAFTA, and each year we have fallen into deeper and deeper trade deficit with those nations.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is it will fuel more illegal immigration. Just like NAFTA, millions of people will be uprooted from the rural countryside with no hope, no continental labor rights, and become an exploitable class of people used by the most unscrupulous traffickers on the continent.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is that Central American workers will continue to be subjected to sweatshop conditions because the enforcement provisions that exist in the Caribbean Basin Initiative, CBI, will not apply. Right now CAFTA countries are not robust democracies. But what the CBI does in the Caribbean is assures that trade rights are linked to access to the U.S. market and enforcement of labor provisions.

CAFTA backslides on this lock-tight trigger. It basically has some encouraging language to nations to enforce their labor laws which may be poor or non-existent, and no matter how weak, gives them a go-ahead and then sets aside money in the agreement to give to the very governments that are not enforcing those laws anyway.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is it hurts U.S. agriculture. In fact, CAFTA nations already are saturated with U.S. agricultural products which consume about 94 percent of their market, so there is not much room to grow there. And, more importantly, CAFTA provides that Brazilian ethanol and other imports, if processed inside of these Central American countries, and 35 percent of the processing occurs there, can be back-doored into the United States. So it will be the

same kind of back-dooring into the United States of products from these other countries that has happened with NAFTA, Mexico and Canada.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is it will regress democratic reform in CAFTA countries. CAFTA does nothing to advance democracy in the six nations that are a part of it. In fact, the civil societies in those countries are broadly opposed to CAFTA. Huge demonstrations against CAFTA have occurred in every one of those nations, and the manner in which this is being voted on in those countries is truly troublesome. Three countries have used emergency procedures, bringing up late at night, the public does not know what is happening. And in the other three countries it has not even been voted on. Not exactly a way to carry forward the idea of democratic liberties across the hemisphere.

Another reason to vote “no” on CAFTA is its lack of real environmental enforcement and our knowledge that with NAFTA drug trafficking has snubbed up right against the U.S. border at Juarez. When you have these trade agreements that do not have other contingent policies attached to them, what you end up doing is empowering some of the worst forces in the hemisphere.

Finally, CAFTA will hurt women workers disproportionately in societies where women’s rights are already marginalized. How would you like to be a woman in a textile plant in one of those countries? Or how about in a banana-packing shed? What do you think your future would look like? Sixty percent of those working in these sweatshop conditions are women workers with absolutely no labor protections. CAFTA is doing nothing to improve their standing in our hemisphere, and it will do nothing to obliterate the sweatshops that are so very much a part of their lives.

The combined purchasing powers of all of these Central American countries is the same as Columbus, Ohio or New Haven, Connecticut. They really do not have the kind wherewithal to purchase value-added products from our country.

So what is CAFTA really about? CAFTA is merely about expanding the NAFTA model to six other countries, providing more export platforms to the United States of goods, both agricultural and manufactured are back-doored into this country, and providing none of the advances in freedom, liberty, opportunity and hope that should be the hallmark of this country at home and abroad.

EGYPTIAN FOREIGN RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House is poised to consider House Resolution 2601, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for

Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007. Among the many critical provisions in this bill is one relating to Egypt that I would like to discuss tonight.

Despite large amounts of bilateral U.S. assistance, Egypt has failed to modernize its economy, it has failed to end the influence of Islamic influence in the schools and in the media, and it has failed to improve the human rights situation in its homeland.

While Mr. Mubarak continues to pay lip service to holding participatory, multi-party elections, dissidents and those who voice their opposition to the government’s policies continue to be arrested, to be beaten, and otherwise punished for attempting to exercise their most basic fundamental human rights as human beings and Egyptian citizens.

In response, the underlying provisions in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, also known as the State Department Authorization Bill, shifts funds from military aid to economic assistance for the purpose of supporting Egyptian civil society and improving the quality of life of the Egyptian people.

The underlying provision transfers \$40 million in military aid for each of the next 3 years, a mere 3 percent of Egypt’s overall \$1.3 billion to economic assistance. Egypt faces no military threat. However, Egypt continues to procure jet fighters, tanks, armored personnel carriers, Apache helicopters, anti-aircraft missile batteries, surveillance aircraft, and other equipment under our Foreign Military Sales program, in addition to unconfirmed reports of Egyptian attempts to procure North Korean medium-range missiles, and these are serious questions regarding the purpose and rationale of an ongoing military build-up by the Egyptian Government.

In addition, after decades of promises and unfulfilled commitments to the United States, Egypt’s economic conditions remain dire. The underlying provision in the bill is hardly a major price to pay in order to send the message that Egypt needs to pay more attention to human rights and economic and social development. Not one penny is cut from the overall aid package. It is merely a shift in priorities.

The Hyde/Lantos/Ros-Lehtinen provision is in keeping with U.S. public diplomacy efforts by sending a clear message about U.S. priorities for Egypt’s future and the future for the Egyptian people. It builds good will with the people of the region by supporting educational, economic, and biological development, goals which contribute most effectively to Egypt’s internal stability.

This provision also supports the priorities of President Bush to bring freedom, democracy, and sound economies to the Middle East. He articulated here in this Chamber in the State of the Union earlier this year that the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the

Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East.

Finally, the underlying provisions further supports congressional views articulated in the 9/11 Implementation Act regarding the need to reevaluate our previous policies of supporting dictatorships and, in turn, support civil society and reforms as a means of addressing the precursor conditions which breed terrorism.

In Egypt, we see a nation of great potential; and to fully realize that potential, Egypt must reform itself, economically and politically. The language already in the bill seeks to empower Egyptian civil society rather than the entrenched Egyptian military.

In this context, I ask my colleagues to oppose any amendments that seek to strike this provision. Any amendment to weaken or to strike the Egyptian language in the authorization bill would send the wrong message to Egypt and to other dictatorial regimes in the broader Middle East, that they can proceed with virtual impunity and it is business as usual. In a post-9/11 world, this is the wrong message to send.

RENEGOTIATE CAFTA

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, last year this Congress was promised a vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by the end of 2004. December 31 came and went. Then at a White House news conference in May, President Bush called on Congress to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement by Memorial Day. Memorial Day came and went. In June, Congress was once again promised a vote which was supposed to have been before the July 4 recess. The July 4 recess came and went.

Now we understand a vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement could come in front of the House next week.

The many of us who have been speaking out against CAFTA have a message for this Congress: renegotiate CAFTA.

Those of us opposed to this CAFTA do want a trade agreement with Central America, do want to trade with the five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic; but we want an agree that benefits the many, not the few.

This agreement was negotiated and written by a select few. This agreement benefits those same select few. As the President travels the Nation trying to sell this CAFTA to the American public, he is hearing firsthand from U.S. workers, from family farmers, from small business owners, especially small manufacturers, from ranchers, from religious leaders that they do not want this CAFTA either. Their message is loud and clear: renegotiate CAFTA.

In response to the President's trip this past Friday to North Carolina, a New York Times headline reads, "Bush Sells Trade Pact in Hostile Territory." That is what the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) spoke about earlier, a Republican from North Carolina. A Huntsville, Alabama Times editorial in Sunday's paper reads, "Say No to the Central American Free Trade Agreement." Again, a newspaper understanding that the free trade agreement is not good for Alabama. It is not good for the South. It is not good for Tennessee. It is not good for this country.

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A Wall Street Journal headline today reads, and this is a newspaper that is always supportive of trade agreements, "CAFTA Is No Cure-all For Central America."

This CAFTA represents more than a decade of failed U.S. trade policies. Look what has happened with our trade policies in the last dozen years. In 1992, the year I was elected to Congress, the U.S. had a \$38 billion trade deficit. That means we exported \$38 billion less than we imported. Twelve years later, in 2004, that trade deficit went from \$28 billion in a dozen years to \$618 billion. That translates directly into lost jobs; more than 200,000 lost jobs in the district of the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP), more than 220,000 lost jobs in the district of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) and the district of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL). It is clear our trade policy is simply not working.

CAFTA languished in Congress for more than a year, then passed the Senate last month by the narrowest margin ever of any trade agreement because this wrong-headed trade agreement does not work for Republicans or Democrats. It offends Republicans, dozens of Republicans in this body, and it offends dozens of Democrats in this body.

We know this agreement is a continuation of its dysfunctional cousin, NAFTA, another failed trade policy of the last dozen years. It is the same old story. Every time there is a trade agreement, the President says it will mean more manufacturing products that we will export overseas. Every time there is a trade agreement the President says it will mean more jobs for Americans. And every time there is a trade agreement the President says it will raise the standard of living in the developing countries. Yet with every trade agreement their promises fall by the wayside in favor of large corporate interests that send U.S. jobs overseas and exploit cheap labor abroad.

This CAFTA is simply, as the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) pointed out, about exploiting cheap labor abroad. This CAFTA will not enable the Central American or Nicaraguan, or Honduras, or Guatemala workers to buy cars made in Ohio. It will not

allow those workers to buy software developed in Seattle. It will not mean more prime beef exports from Nebraska, because those workers simply cannot afford to buy those products. This CAFTA, instead, is about U.S. companies moving plants to Honduras, outsourcing jobs to Nicaragua, and exploiting cheap labor in Guatemala.

Desperate after failing to gin up support for the agreement based on its merits, CAFTA supporters are now attempting to buy votes with fantastic promises. And if that fails, they will twist arms. Count on this; this is a prediction: They will call the vote in the middle of the night, hold the rollcall open for hours to pass a bad agreement that will benefit only a select few.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, we should throw out this failed agreement and negotiate a better CAFTA. When the world's poorest people can buy American products and not just make them, we will know then that our trade policies are working.

THE ECONOMY/CARL ROVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, our Democrat colleagues said Republicans should not lower taxes because we needed those tax dollars for more programs and more spending. Republicans knew that more new programs and additional spending was the last thing we needed to be doing. We fought to reduce taxes, and we said that lower taxes would bring this economy out of a recession.

Today, our policies have been proven to be correct. Our tax relief has spurred economic growth and created jobs. We have a near historically low unemployment rate of about 5 percent. Home ownership is at historic highs. We have helped millions of Americans achieve the dream of home ownership. We have a 69 percent home ownership rate.

Mr. Speaker, 146,000 new jobs were created in June, adding to the millions of jobs created in the past 3 years, giving us 25 months of sustained consecutive economic growth. We lowered taxes and this year we are seeing unexpectedly high tax revenues. Our deficit is going to be \$100 billion less because of tremendous economic growth.

And what about this is confusing to Democrats? Well, they say, okay, that is good economic news, but we have a deficit. And to that we say, well, why not join us and cut spending. Let us reduce and eliminate unneeded programs. Let us not raise taxes.

When we lowered taxes, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the minority leader, led the Democrats in predicting that this relief would do nothing at all for our Nation's economy. I think it is fair to say that she and her party are pretty much out of touch on that issue. And I know that