

We are pressing for increased coordination with the British on counter-narcotics; with the Germans on policing and police training; and with the Italians on justice sector reform. In addition to the traditional smuggling routes through Iran and Turkey, reports indicate a continued movement of heroin shipments north from Afghanistan through the central Asian states, Pakistan and India en route to international markets.

Our strongest partners in these efforts must be those consumer nations where the drugs are destined. The financial, resource, and intelligence requirements to defeat the scourge are not our sole responsibility. The administration must seek commitments from Europe and elsewhere to share this burden, where they get 90 percent of the heroin.

Let me give my colleagues an example of a successful international operation. Operation Containment is an ongoing effort by the DEA. They recently arrested 15 members of a heroin trafficking organization and seized 7.4 tons of morphine base in Turkey. Morphine base can be converted to heroin at a ratio of one to one with a chemical. This is the largest seizure of morphine base ever made. To put the magnitude of this seizure in perspective, the amount seized was more than four times the total worldwide morphine base seizures made in 2000.

There are legitimate uses of the chemical acetic anhydride in industry. Countries that produce this chemical must do their part by restricting or controlling its sale and transportation to legitimate consumers.

The Department of Defense has seen the magnitude of the transshipment problem with three separate seizures by the U.S. Navy operating in the Gulf region. The first seizure was made on December 15 when a motorized dhow was apprehended in the Arabian Gulf. Two tons of narcotics were seized, and three of the 15-man crew were identified as having possible ties to al Qaeda. On December 18, two more dhows were intercepted. Those seizures yielded drugs worth more than \$10 million.

I am passionate about this subject. I have chaired a hearing on Afghanistan just last week. Many of the members of my subcommittee have visited the region. The administration must extract commitments from the Europeans to pull their own weight. As leaders of the coalition of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Department of Defense must be compelled to address the growth, storage, processing, and transshipment of drugs in the region. The bullets and bombs used against our own troops are purchased with illicit funds. The Department of State and the DEA must be resourced adequately to address and to assist Afghanistan in reestablishing a viable criminal justice system so that their own poppy ban can be effectively enforced.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman 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 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.)

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LONGEST MAJOR STRIKE IN UFCW ENDS

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

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to discuss the end of a long strike; in fact, the longest major strike in the history of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, and the largest and longest strike in the history of the supermarket industry, a strike that saw the United Food and Commercial Workers hold the line in southern California.

The dispute, which involved some 60,000 UFCW members employed at 852 Safeway-owned Vons and Pavillions stores, Kroger-owned Ralphs and Albertsons stores, began back in October 11, 2003. Officials for the grocery store chain said their workers had a Cadillac health plan that the stores could not maintain in a market with nonunion competitors such as Walmart. I am not sure I would call the plan in question a Cadillac plan, but the proposal to replace it was clearly a Yugo.

Supermarket workers in southern California average about \$12 to \$14 an hour, and most work less than 40 hours a week, not by choice. Under the employer's proposal, after 3 years an average worker would earn about \$12.30 an hour, that is \$369 a week before taxes are taken out, or about \$19,000 a year. That is a salary that can keep a single mom and her children just above the poverty line; but cut her health care benefits or shift several thousand dollars worth of health care costs from the company on to her and a self-supporting working family can be reduced to near poverty.

In fact, many workers will drop coverage because it will be too expensive and move over to Medi-Cal, which is California's Medicaid program for the elderly, poor, and disabled, as well as to other State and Federal programs for low-income workers. In my mind, this is safety net exploitation by employers. This marks a shift from the employer's books to the ledgers of the American taxpayer.

Thankfully, for 5 months the picket line remained strong, members remained united, and customers honored

the workers' picket lines. This is a testament to the rank-and-file UFCW workers and to the leadership of UFCW local leaders. To people like Rick Icaza, President, and Rod Diamond, Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW Local 770; to Connie Leyva, President of UFCW Local 1428; Michael Straeter, President of UFCW Local 1442; to George Hartwell, President of Local 1036, Greg Conger, President of Local 324; Bill Lathrop, President of Local 1167; and Mickey Kasparian, President of Local 135 of the UFCW, we say thank you to you, and we hope that you will express our sincerest congratulations and thanks to all of your men and women in your locals who fought and stood tall throughout this entire 5-month long process.

Every day support for the fight for affordable health care grew stronger. Community and religious leaders joined the cause. The southern California supermarket strike became a national cause as well. There were rallies, picket lines, and hand billing across America.

The men and women on the picket lines are genuine heroes. Their sacrifice for affordable family health care has motivated and activated workers across the Nation. To the Webb family in Los Angeles I send a special message of esteem and pride. Andre and Dee, you, like many of your brothers and sisters, persevered. Christmas was tough this past December, but you weathered these difficult times in a way that makes all of us who are parents so very, very proud. And Andre, your daughter A.J. wrote you a letter for Valentine's Day, which many of us had a chance to read during the father-daughter dance at school, which you will never forget. She understood your fight and offered the best reason to stand firm. At 8 years of age, A.J. is already giving us a glimpse of the next generation of leaders for America.

The labor struggle in southern California is one manifestation of a very large national debate on health care. Lack of access to quality health care and escalating health care costs are issues of concern to all Americans, particularly to communities that are minority and very poor, that suffer the highest rates of uninsured Americans, and are also among those that are least well covered because of disproportionate and disparate health care received by these communities.

The lack of insurance is devastating to millions of families across America. We must make every effort to find ways to extend coverage and to work to end the erosion of employment-based health care coverage due to rising out-of-pocket health care costs that make insurance unaffordable for many workers. If the supermarket giants, profitable, growing corporations, can launch an attack on health care benefits, then every employer is sure to follow. They have sounded the alarm that the American health care system is under siege.

I say to all Americans who are working: Take note of what the United Food and Commercial Workers did over the last 5 months. They stood tall. Let us defend health care coverage for all Americans and we will fight to make sure our next generation also has it.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR ERIC COOKE

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, there have been over 500 soldiers now killed in action in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and I rise this evening to share with the Members of this body a letter that my office received today in tribute to one of these great American heroes, Command Sergeant Major Eric Cooke.

"There seem to be so few heroes today. I wanted to tell you about one: Command Sergeant Major Eric Cooke of the First Armored Division. Command Sergeant Major Cooke died on Christmas Eve when a roadside bomb ripped into his Humvee north of Baghdad on a convoy to Samara. He was 43 years old.

"Just before his death, Command Sergeant Major Cooke had written my uncle, David Hunter, that he had not signed up for the 2-week Christmas leave available to soldiers who were deployed to Iraq because he could not take the leave knowing that one of his men would not be receiving theirs. CSM Cooke said he was lucky to have a loving wife who would understand why he was not coming home for Christmas. He was career United States Army, and she understood his commitment.

"On the day he died, Command Sergeant Major Cooke heard of an injured soldier who was in urgent need of O-positive blood, so he rushed to a nearby field hospital to donate his own. He almost missed that convoy going to Samara. Command Sergeant Major Cooke had the opportunity to have an armored Humvee, but he chose to give it to his men so they would be protected during armed escort duty, patrols and raid operations. His selfless service knew no limits.

"If you or I knew the day we would die, we might change the way we were living as that day approached. Command Sergeant Major Cooke did not need to change a thing. He lived each of his days in a selfless and noble manner. Every soldier's death is a tragedy, but this one seemed especially sad.

"Command Sergeant Major Cooke was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on January 5, 2004 at 3 p.m. with full military honors befitting an American hero.

"Written by Lucy Everett Edmondson of Rocky Mount, North Carolina."

Mr. Speaker, I knew Command Sergeant Major Cooke. I met him on the tarmac at the Baghdad International

Airport on December 22, 2 days before his death. It was my only opportunity to ever be in a theater of combat operations, and it seemed relatively safe there on the tarmac. But as I looked into his crystal clear blue eyes, he told me about his 26 years of service to this country in Kosovo, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and now Operation Iraqi Freedom as well. He was looking forward to his retirement in 4 years, but very proud of his service to his country.

Indeed, Ms. Edmondson, Sergeant Major Eric Cooke was a true American hero.

TRADE AGREEMENTS, THE U.S. ECONOMY, AND JOBS

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, 2 weeks ago, President Bush sent to Congress this Central American Free Trade Agreement, an agreement that would expand NAFTA to six countries in Central America. He plans later to send to Congress an agreement called the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which would expand NAFTA, except for Cuba, to all the rest of Latin America.

These two agreements will double the size of the North American Free Trade Agreement in population, will quadruple the number of low-income workers in what is now the North American Free Trade Agreement, so that in the Free Trade Area of the Americas it would have that many countries, that many people, that many low-income workers.

Now, you would think that the President of the United States would understand, with the economy the way it is, that this is not the right response. Ohio, my home State and that of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), who is here, also from Toledo, our State has lost 166,000 manufacturing jobs. One out of six Ohio manufacturing jobs is gone, likely will not return, mostly gone overseas. Companies have shut down, companies have outsourced production, companies have moved their facilities overseas, south of the border, or elsewhere.

Ohio literally has lost, in fact the country has lost manufacturing jobs every single month since George Bush took office. This country has lost some 3 million jobs since President Bush took office. And to every bit of bad economic news, every time the unemployment rate goes up, every time there is a report on lost jobs, every time there is bad economic news, the President has two answers: Tax cuts for the people who need them least. Tax cuts for the wealthiest people in our society. Half these tax cuts go to the richest 1 percent. Tax cuts for the wealthy, hoping they trickle down and provide a few jobs maybe, or give some economic prosperity to the country. That is one of his answers. The other answer is

more trade agreements, like NAFTA, like MFN/PNTR for China, like the World Trade Organization, more trade agreements that ship jobs overseas; that hemorrhage jobs overseas.

Now, in this economic report of the President, which came out last week, signed by President Bush, on page 4, issued by the President's Chief Economic Adviser Gregory Mankiw, also signed by him, he is the President's top economic adviser, it says that Mr. Mankiw predicted on behalf of the President that we would create 2.6 million jobs this year. Even the President's people, after that report came out, said, no, no, no, we cannot create that many, and they immediately disavowed parts of this report.

But it is the same old thing. When the President first took office, he said, give me the tax breaks and we will create millions of jobs. He got the tax cuts, but no jobs were created. Jobs were lost. Then after September 11, clearly a tragedy for our country, clearly a blow to our economy, but after September 11, the President said, give me more tax cuts for the wealthiest, aimed at the most wealthy people, the most privileged, the ones who needs it least in society, and we will create 2.5 million jobs. Again he said that, and again we had job loss in this country.

In this report now it says 2.6 million jobs will be created, but it is simply not happening. And again the President's response to every problem with our economy, as this economic report of the President says, more tax cuts for the wealthy and more trade agreements that hemorrhage jobs, that ship jobs overseas.

Now, as we continue, the President wants to see us do more tax cuts this year. Those tax cuts will go again overwhelmingly to the most privileged people in society. But Alan Greenspan came to this Congress last week and he said because we do not have any money, we are going to have to cut Social Security. So not only do the President's tax cuts not create jobs in this country, not only do the President's tax cuts, who overwhelmingly go to the wealthiest people in society, not only do they not simulate the economy and create jobs, but they also mean that the President and his economic advisers are making a choice; it is either tax cuts or funding Social Security.

They have made their choice. Alan Greenspan, the President's man at the Federal Reserve, has said we cannot afford to fully fund Social Security, and later he will talk the same about Medicare because we have this huge budget deficit. We have this huge budget deficit because of the these tax cuts going overwhelmingly to the wealthiest people. And Alan Greenspan and the President are saying we need this year to do additional tax cuts, again for the wealthiest people in society.

You see how this adds up? Tax cuts for the wealthiest people in society, trade agreements that hemorrhage jobs