

[From Associated Press, Oct. 2, 2011]

STUDY: COLOMBIA ANTI-UNION VIOLENCE

UNDETERRED

(By Frank Bajak)

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA.—A new study challenges claims from the administration of President Barack Obama that Colombia is making important strides in bringing to justice killers of labor activists and so deserves U.S. congressional approval of a long-stalled free trade pact.

The Human Rights Watch study found “virtually no progress” in getting convictions for killings that have occurred in the past 4½ years.

It counted just six convictions obtained by a special prosecutions unit from 195 slayings between January 2007 and May 2011, with nearly nine in 10 of the unit’s cases from that period in preliminary stages with no suspect formally identified.

Democrats in the U.S. Congress have long resisted bringing the Colombia trade pact to a vote, citing what they said is insufficient success in halting such killings.

The White House disagrees, and says Colombia has made significant progress in addressing anti-unionist violence.

It is pushing for congressional approval as early as this week of the Colombia agreement along with pacts with South Korea and Panama, something the Republicans endorse and that they say will increase U.S. exports by \$13 billion a year and support tens of thousands of jobs.

U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk recently said the trade agreements are “an integral part of the President’s plan to create jobs here at home.”

But in Colombia, the world’s most lethal country for labor organizing, the killings haven’t stopped. At least 38 trade unionists have been slain since President Juan Manuel Santos took office in August 2010, says Colombia’s National Labor School.

“A major reason for this ongoing violence has been the chronic lack of accountability for cases of anti-union violence,” Human Rights Watch said in a letter sent Thursday to Colombian Chief Prosecutor Viviane Morales that details the study’s findings.

Convictions have been obtained for less than 10 percent of the 2,886 trade unionists killed since 1986, and the rights group said it found “severe shortcomings” in the work of a special unit of Morales’ office established five years ago to solve the slayings. The letter says the unit has demonstrated “a routine failure to adequately investigate the motive” in labor killings as well as to “bring to justice all responsible parties.”

A chief finding: The 74 convictions achieved over the past year owe largely to plea bargains with members of illegal far-right militias who confessed to killings in exchange for leniency.

They did so under the so-called Justice and Peace law that gave paramilitary fighters reduced prison sentences of up to eight years in exchange for laying down their arms and confessing to crimes. That law expired at the end of 2006, the year the free trade pact was signed.

Only in a handful of cases did prosecutors pursue evidence that the paramilitaries who confessed acted on the orders of politicians, employers or others, Human Rights Watch says.

Prosecutors “made virtually no progress in prosecuting people who order, pay, instigate or collude with paramilitaries in attacking trade unionists,” the letter states. “What is at stake is the justice system’s ability to act as an effective deterrent to anti-union violence.”

Of the more than 275 convictions handed down through May, 80 percent were against

former members of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC. The head of international affairs in the chief prosecutor’s office, Francisco Echeverri, told the AP that it has put 513 people in prison.

In nearly half of 50 recent convictions reviewed by Human Rights Watch, the judges cited “evidence pointing to the involvement of members of the security forces or intelligence services, politicians, landowners, bosses or coworkers.” Yet in only one of those cases was such an individual convicted.

In the case of a gym teacher and union activist killed in the northwestern town of San Rafael in 2002, one of the paramilitaries who confessed to the crime said it was committed at the request of the mayor, according to the judge’s decision.

The man who was mayor at the time and was re-elected in 2008, Edgar Eladio Giraldo, is not being formally investigated and has not been questioned about the killing, said Hernando Castaneda, chief of the special unit.

“I have no knowledge of that and did not know that I was involved in that,” Giraldo told The Associated Press by telephone when asked about the killing of Julio Ernesto Ceballos.

A spokeswoman for Chief Prosecutor Morales said Sunday that her boss had not yet seen the Human Rights Watch letter.

Dan Kovalik of the United Steel Workers said the study’s findings and the continued killings “prove what labor is telling the White House: The labor rights situation in Colombia is not improving, and passage of the FTA is not appropriate.”

A memo soon to be released by the AFL-CIO deems Colombia noncompliant with the “Labor Action Plan” Santos and Obama agreed to in April as a condition for White House approval of the free trade pact.

In the memo, shown to the AP, the labor federation finds neither “economic, political, or moral justification for rewarding Colombia with a free trade agreement.”

Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Nkenge Harmon said Friday when presented with the study’s findings that Colombia’s record prosecuting “perpetrators of violence” against labor activists “has improved significantly,” though she added that Colombian officials acknowledge more needs to be done.

Harmon also stressed that additional Colombian resources are being dedicated to the issue and that the U.S. government “is working intensively with them through training and support.”

Human Rights Watch acknowledged that annual trade unionists killings are only a quarter of what they were a decade ago. And it applauded some measures taken by Chief Prosecutor Morales, including her announcement that an additional 100 police investigators would be assigned to the special investigative unit.

But HRW regional director Jose Miguel Vivanco said “the challenge (Morales) is facing remains huge.”

A U.S. congressman who has met with various Colombian presidents on human rights issues, Jim McGovern, a Democrat from Massachusetts, doesn’t think enough has been done to reverse what he called a “dismal” record.

Said McGovern: “My worry is that if you approve the FTA at this particular point you remove all the pressure off the powers that be in Colombia to actually make a sincere, honest and concerted attempt to improve the situation.”

A STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE

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

Mr. WOLF. My conscience has compelled me to come to the floor today to voice concerns I have with the influence Grover Norquist, the president of Americans for Tax Reform, has on the political process in Washington. My issue is not with ATR’s goal of keeping taxes low. Like Ronald Reagan said, and I believe, “The problem is not that the people are taxed too little; the problem is that government spends too much.”

I want to be perfectly clear: I do not support raising taxes on the American people. My concern is with the other individuals, groups and causes with whom Mr. Norquist is associated that have nothing to do with keeping taxes low.

Among them:

One, Mr. Norquist’s relationship with Jack Abramoff. Mr. Abramoff essentially laundered money through ATR and Mr. Norquist knew it.

Two, his association and representation of terrorist financier and vocal Hamas supporter Abdurahman Alamoudi. He also is associated with terrorist financier Sami al-Arian, who pled guilty in 2006 to conspiring to provide services to Palestinian Islamic jihad.

Three, Mr. Norquist’s lobbying on behalf of Fannie Mae.

Fourth, Mr. Norquist’s representation of the Internet gambling industry.

Fifth, Mr. Norquist’s advocacy of moving Guantanamo Bay detainees to the United States, including 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

Simply put, I believe Mr. Norquist is connected with or has profited from a number of unsavory people and groups out of the mainstream. I also believe that Mr. Norquist has used the ATR “pledge” as leverage to advance other issues that many Americans would find inappropriate and, when taken as a whole, should give people pause.

I raise these concerns today in the context of dealing with the future of our country. America is in trouble. Unemployment is over 9 percent. Housing values continue to decline. Retirement accounts are threatened. The American people are worried. Yet Washington is tragically shackled in ideological gridlock. Some are dead set against any change to entitlement programs, while others insist that any discussion of tax policy is off the table.

We are at a point today that the tsunami of debt in America demands that every piece of the budget be scrutinized, and that means more than just cutting waste, fraud and abuse and discretionary programs. The real runaway spending is occurring in our out-of-control entitlement costs and the hundreds of billions in annual tax earmarks in our Tax Code. Until we reach an agreement that addresses those two drivers of our deficit and debt, we cannot right our fiscal ship of state. Everything must be on the table, and I believe how the “pledge” is interpreted and enforced by Mr. Norquist is a roadblock to realistically reforming our Tax Code.

When Senator TOM COBURN recently called for eliminating the special interest ethanol tax subsidy, who led the opposition? Mr. Norquist. Have we already forgotten the battle over earmarks from last year? Unlike an earmark included in an annual appropriations bill, tax earmarks are far worse because, once enacted, they typically exist in perpetuity. Have we really reached a point where one person's demand for ideological purity is paralyzing Congress to the point that even a discussion of tax reform is viewed as breaking a no-tax pledge?

I understand that some may not agree with what I say. I know many are not aware of Mr. Norquist's associations. But my conscience compels me to speak out today. Reasonable people can differ on the merits of pledges—and I respect those differences—but the issue is with the interpreter and the enforcer of a pledge. William Wilberforce, the British parliamentarian and abolitionist, famously told his colleagues: "Having heard all of this, you may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say you did not know."

I urge my colleagues to read my full statement in the RECORD, which will also be posted on my Web page, going into greater detail on the issues I have raised.

A STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE

Mr. Speaker, every day, brave men and women in our armed forces and their families are sacrificing for our country—many making the ultimate sacrifice. Despite the danger, they rise to the occasion. At this time of political and economic crisis, will the Congress and the president match their courage? Will we rise to the occasion?

Every member of Congress and the president know the dire economic situation facing our country. A debt load well over \$14.5 trillion. Annual deficits over \$1 trillion.

A separate but some believe even more important challenge is addressing the over \$62 trillion in unfunded obligations and liabilities on the books for entitlements including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

We always say we want to leave our country better than we found it and to give our children and grandchildren hope for the future. But if we do not change course, the debt burden will crush future generations. Every penny of the federal budget will go to interest on the debt and entitlement spending by 2028. Every penny. That means no money for our national defense. No money for homeland security. No money to fix our nation's crumbling infrastructure. No money for cancer research.

The uncertainty about our nation's economic future is undermining employer and consumer confidence, preventing the recovery we so desperately need to get Americans back to work.

According to the most recent jobs data, the economy failed to add a single net job during August 2011. Not one. The nation's unemployment rate continues to hover above 9 percent.

We hear from our constituents every day that they are worried about their jobs. They are worried about the value of their houses. They are worried about their investments and retirement plans.

Furthermore, we face these challenges not in a vacuum, but in an increasingly competitive and dangerous world filled with those who would stand to benefit from an America in decline. Among our biggest "bankers" are China—which is spying on us, where human rights are an afterthought, and Catholic bishops, Protestant ministers and Tibetan monks are jailed for practicing their faith—and oil-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia, which funded the radical madrasahs on the Afghan-Pakistan border resulting in the rise of the Taliban and al Qaeda.

At a time when strong leadership is needed to address this fiscal crisis, it is unfortunate that President Obama has continually failed to lead by example. He even walked away from the recommendations of his own fiscal commission.

And just last month, on September 16, the Washington Post reported that President Obama is once again walking away from any serious effort to address the deficit and debt by removing any discussion of Social Security from the debt negotiations. Once again, the president is not only failing to lead, but obstructing the process to find a bipartisan agreement on deficit reduction.

The president and some on the other side of the aisle say that this debt crisis is because Americans are undertaxed. In fact, the president just proposed paying for another round of temporary stimulus spending by permanently limiting charitable tax deductions. He knows that even members of his own party would never support this. I don't support this either.

Like President Reagan said, and I believe, "The problem is not that people are taxed too little, the problem is that government spends too much." There is no question that the real problem is overspending, especially on runaway entitlement costs and through hundreds of billions of so-called tax expenditures.

It is no secret that our inefficient and burdensome tax code is undermining consumer and business confidence further weakening our fragile economic recovery. Comprehensive tax reform is needed now more than ever to rid our tax code of earmarks and loopholes that promote crony capitalism and let Washington pick winners and losers.

Yet we sit here today shackled in ideological gridlock. Some insist that any discussion of tax policy is off the table. Others reject any change in entitlement programs.

On the Democrat side, MoveOn.org and other liberal interests tie the hands of Democrat members, threatening them should they break ranks on any deficit reduction plan that touches social programs.

On the Republican side, Grover Norquist holds up the Americans for Tax Reform's Taxpayer Protection Pledge to block even the mention of putting tax reform on the table for discussion as part of a deficit reduction agreement.

For over five years I have pushed bipartisan legislation to set up an independent commission to develop a comprehensive deficit reduction package that would require an up-or-down vote by the Congress. I have said that the enormity of the crisis we face demands that everything must be on the table for discussion—all entitlement spending, all domestic discretionary spending, and tax policy; not tax increases, but reforms to make the tax code simpler and fairer and free from special interest earmarks.

I have supported every serious effort to resolve this crisis: the Bowles-Simpson recommendations, the "Gang of Six" effort, and the "Cut, Cap and Balance" bill—including the Balanced Budget Amendment. None of these solutions were perfect, but they all took the steps necessary to rebuild and protect our economy.

Powerful special interests continue to hold this institution hostage and undermine every good faith effort to change course.

POLITICAL PLEDGES

Some may ask: what's the big deal in signing a pledge by a special interest group to articulate a candidate's position on a political issue?

Pledges are not new to politics, but conservatives have long recognized their danger. In 1774 during an address to the electors of Bristol, the father of conservatism, Edmund Burke, refused to bind himself to a pledge during the campaign and renounced their "coercive authority."

Burke said that an elected representative's "unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. . . . They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

More recently, preeminent American conservative academic Russell Kirk identified the principal qualities of a conservative leader. Kirk urged conservatives to follow Burke's example and to be prudent. According to Kirk, "to be 'prudent' means to be judicious, cautious, sagacious. Plato, and later Burke, instruct us that in the statesman, prudence is the first of the virtues. A prudent statesman is one who looks before he leaps; who takes long views; who knows that politics is the art of the possible."

Conservatives of all people should not be locked into any ideological position. We are bearers of a conservative tradition. Conservatism is not an ideology; it's not doctrine or dogma. It is a way of seeing life. It draws on the wisdom of the past to view events of the present. We all stand on the shoulders of the great people who have gone before us. That is why G. K. Chesterton described our experiment as "democracy of the dead" because we care about the foundation laid by our forefathers.

Burke's wisdom was succinctly summarized by Governor Jeb Bush, who told the Washington Post's Michael Gerson in July, "I never raised taxes. I'm pro-life. But I don't recall signing any of those pledges. You don't hide your beliefs. You persuade people. You win or lose. And if you win, you are not beholden to anyone or anything other than your own beliefs."

I don't sign or support political pledges. Reasonable people can disagree about the philosophical merits of signing pledges—and I respect those differences. But even for those who do, I think everyone can recognize that the real danger of pledges lies with the ideologues who claim ownership of the interpretation and enforcement of the pledge.

Since 1986, Grover Norquist has asked every candidate for office to sign the "Taxpayer Protection Pledge." He is the owner of the pledge, which he says binds the signer in

perpetuity to oppose any and all tax increases, as determined solely by Norquist. He even locks the pledges in a safe. He has become the self-anointed protector and if anyone dares challenge him, be prepared for retribution.

Jason Horowitz, in a July 12 Washington Post article reported: "The sacred texts from which Grover Norquist draws his political power are hidden in a secret fireproof safe."

He quotes Norquist: "I keep the originals in a vault, in case D.C. burns down. When someone takes the pledge, you don't want it tampered with; you don't want it destroyed."

In his own words in the October 2011 edition of *The American Spectator*, Norquist says, "Take the Pledge, win the primary. Take the Pledge, win the general. Break the Pledge, lose the next election."

Columnist Robert Samuelson, in a July 10 Washington Post piece pointed out, "just in case you hadn't noticed, no one has elected Grover Norquist to anything. Still, he looms as a major obstacle to Congress reaching a deficit-reduction agreement. . . ."

Samuelson continued: "[B]ut what's revealing about Norquist's passionate advocacy is that it virtually ignores the main causes of bigger government: Social Security and Medicare."

I agree that entitlement spending is the 800-pound gorilla in the room. The hundreds of billions in annual tax earmarks in our tax code also must be dealt with. Until we reach an agreement that addresses these two drivers of our deficits and debt, we cannot right our fiscal ship of state.

We are at a point today that the tsunami of debt in America demands that every slice of the budget be scrutinized. As I said before, everything must be on the table.

Have we really reached a point where one person's demand for ideological purity is paralyzing Congress to the point that even a discussion of tax reform is viewed as breaking a no-tax pledge?

It is curious that Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform, yet his purist pledge has no mention of working to reform the tax code to make it simpler and fairer to average American taxpayers.

ATTACKS ON CONGRESS

We recently witnessed Norquist's zealotry in action as he worked to stop Senator TOM COBURN's call for eliminating the ethanol tax subsidy. Senator COBURN signed Norquist's pledge, but he dared to call for a change in the tax code to eliminate spending through the tax code.

In signing the pledge, a candidate promises to: "one, oppose any and all efforts to increase the marginal income tax rates for individuals and/or businesses; and two, oppose any net reduction or elimination of deductions and credits, unless matched dollar for dollar by further reducing tax rates."

In Mr. Norquist's way of thinking, for Senator Coburn to pursue a change in the tax code to cut a tax earmark, he was breaking the pledge. Norquist accused this honorable member of Congress of lying his way into office.

In his recent report, *Back to Black*, Senator Coburn identified nearly \$1 trillion in annual spending through the types of tax earmarks that Grover Norquist defends. Many of these earmarks are designed to benefit special interests. NASCAR, dog and horse tracks, tackle box makers, railroads, mohair producers,

hedge fund managers, ethanol producers, automakers, and video game developers—all receive tax breaks which subsidize their businesses.

A September 10, 2011, New York Times article reported, "the federal government gave \$123 billion in tax incentives to corporations in 2010, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation." The article highlighted one example of unnecessary and wasteful tax earmarks, stating that tax "breaks for the video game industry—whose domestic sales of \$15 billion a year now exceed those of the music business—are a vivid example of a tax system that defies common sense."

But, according to Mr. Norquist's pledge, anyone who opposes the myriad of tax subsidies that allowed General Electric to avoid paying taxes last year would violate "the pledge." The average American family last year paid more in taxes than GE, which has aggressively offshored thousands of jobs to China and has been actively transferring American technology to the Chinese government, according to an August 23, 2011, article in *The Washington Post* by Howard Schneider.

Have we already forgotten the battle over earmarks from last year? Unlike an earmark included in an annual appropriations bill, these "tax earmarks" are far worse because once enacted they exist in perpetuity. Tax earmarks last for multiple spending cycles—piling up as special interest lobbies succeed in getting more special treatment for their clients. At the end of the day, whether a spending earmark or a tax earmark, the federal government is picking winners and losers, and the losers are hard-working Americans who are looking to us to reduce their tax rates.

I stand with Senator COBURN. I don't want to increase marginal tax rates on hard-working Americans; I want to lower them by ridding the tax code of the loopholes and special interest earmarks. If we can reform the code in that way, we can lower marginal tax rates.

I would submit that Mr. Norquist has every interest in protecting these special interest tax earmarks because that is how he earns his living. A review of his lobbying disclosure forms demonstrate how many special interest issues he lobbies on and how little they have to do with reforming the tax code to lower tax rates on all Americans.

I would also submit that Mr. Norquist's pledge—which candidates sign to indicate their opposition to tax increases—has morphed into a powerful mechanism for Mr. Norquist to ensure that favored tax earmarks to select industries remain untouched, thus preventing comprehensive tax reform.

I believe it is fair to ask: just who is Grover Norquist and how has he amassed such perceived political power inside Washington?

Numerous federal investigations, reports, and public documents point to Grover Norquist using his network of organizations—Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), his former and now defunct lobbying firm Janus-Merritt Strategies, and the Islamic Free Market Institute—in questionable ways, raising money in business activities with people who have been in serious criminal trouble.

A survey of Mr. Norquist's associates reveals that some of his closest business partners and clients have been convicted of crimes and have served time in prison or are currently serving, including Jack Abramoff,

David Safavian, and Dickie Scruggs, as well as convicted terrorist supporters Abdurahman Alamoudi and Sami Al-Arian.

More recently, according to news reports, Mr. Norquist has been an outspoken advocate for moving Guantanamo Bay detainees to the United States, including 9/11 mastermind Khaled Sheik Mohammed to New York City. He also interjected himself into the debate about the proposed "Ground Zero Mosque" last summer.

I want to be clear: I raise these issues not just because Mr. Norquist's associates may be unsavory people. There are many lobbyists in Washington who represent clients of all stripes and backgrounds. But my concern arises when the appearances of impropriety are raised over and over again with a person who has such influence over public policy. That, I believe, should give any fair-minded person pause.

ABRAMOFF SCANDAL

Norquist's role in the Jack Abramoff scandal has been well documented by federal investigators, including the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' 2006 report, *Gimme Five—Investigation of Tribal Lobbying Matters*. Investigators found that Messrs. Norquist and Abramoff developed a secretive relationship under which Mr. Abramoff directed the Choctaw tribe to make payments to Americans for Tax Reform, which, in turn, transferred the money to Ralph Reed's advocacy firm—after taking a "management fee," which averaged \$25,000 per transaction, for agreeing to serve as Abramoff's conduit, according to the committee's report.

According to the same Senate report, "Abramoff said that keeping the arrangement with Norquist and ATR a secret was important. After all, Abramoff wrote '[w]e do not want opponents to think we are trying to buy the tax payer [sic] movement.'"

Again, according to the Senate report, "On May 20, 1999, Norquist had asked Abramoff, 'What is the status of the Choctaw stuff. I have a \$75K hole in my budget from last year. Ouch [sic].' Thus in the fall of 1999, Abramoff reminded himself to 'call Ralph [Reed] re Grover doing pass through.' When Abramoff suggested the Choctaw start using ATR as a conduit, the Tribe agreed."

In February 2000, according to the Senate report, Mr. Abramoff contacted Mr. Reed in advance of a series of \$300,000 payments to ATR to warn him that, "I need to give Grover something for helping, so the first transfer will be a bit lighter."

The degree to which Mr. Norquist was financially benefiting by laundering Mr. Abramoff's money was detailed in the Senate report:

"On February 17, 2000 Abramoff advised Reed that 'ATR will be sending a second \$300K today.' This money, too, came from the Choctaw. Norquist kept another \$25,000 from the second transfer, which apparently surprised Abramoff.

"On March 2, 2000, Abramoff told [Choctaw liaison] Rogers that he needed 'more money asap' for Reed, and requested 'a check for \$300K for Americans for Tax Reform asap.'

"Abramoff's executive assistant Susan Ralston asked him, 'Once ATR gets their check, should the entire \$300k be sent to the Alabama Christian Coalition again?'

"Abramoff replied, 'Yes, but last time they sent \$275K, so I want to make sure that before we send it to ATR I speak with Grover to confirm.'"

Weekly Standard editor Matthew Continetti wrote in his book, *The K Street Gang*, that “between 1995 and 2002 the Mississippi Choctaw donated about \$1.5 million to Americans for Tax Reform.” Mr. Abramoff also instructed his other clients to make regular donations to ATR, according to Continetti’s book. However, the cumulative amount is unknown because Mr. Norquist refuses to identify ATR’s clients, Continetti states.

According to Continetti, during the same period, Mr. Norquist was intimately involved with the questionable activities surrounding other Abramoff clients, including the Marianas Islands, which is prominently featured in the documentary *Casino Jack*. As one participant in Mr. Norquist’s Wednesday Group meetings—a weekly gathering of Mr. Norquist’s invited guests—noted, following Mr. Norquist’s collaboration with Mr. Abramoff, “All of a sudden the Marianas shows up as one of [ATR’s] number-one priority issues,” Continetti writes.

“[The Norquist-Abramoff strategy] was about co-opting conservative journalists and intellectuals,” wrote Continetti. “As outlined in his retrospective memo, Abramoff knew from the start that a good lobbyist not only targeted lawmakers, he also targeted opinion makers. So representatives were dispatched to Norquist’s Wednesday Meetings to preach the gospel When [Abramoff’s clients] visited the United States, Abramoff would not only make sure to shepherd them to Grover Norquist’s Wednesday Meetings. He also billed them thousands of dollars for ‘discussions’ with Norquist. He billed the Marianas for the airfare to send staff members of Americans for Tax Reform to Saipan. From *National Journal*: ‘According to sources familiar with ATR finances, the group sent Marianas officials a bill for \$10,000 at least once in the mid-1990s for attendance at Norquist’s tax policy dinners.’ It paid to be a friend of Jack Abramoff.”

IGNORING SUBPOENAS

It is also noteworthy that Mr. Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform repeatedly refused to comply with the congressional subpoenas for additional information regarding their role in the Abramoff affair, according to an April 21, 2005, article in *Roll Call*.

Additionally, Mr. Norquist refused to comply with an earlier congressional subpoena according to a 1998 Senate Governmental Affairs report, which found Americans for Tax Reform in violation of its tax-exempt status.

Given Norquist’s questionable role in the Abramoff scandal, his refusal to comply with congressional subpoenas is all the more troubling.

TERRORIST CONNECTIONS

Not only was Mr. Norquist entangled with the criminal dealings of Jack Abramoff, but documentation shows that he has deep ties to supporters of Hamas and other terrorist organizations that are sworn enemies of the United States and our ally Israel.

According to Senate lobbying disclosure records of his now defunct lobbying firm, Janus-Merritt Strategies, around the years 2000 and 2001 Mr. Norquist’s firm represented Abdurahman Alamoudi, who was convicted two years later for his role in a terrorist plot and who is presently serving a 23-year sentence in federal prison.

Court documents and a October 15, 2004, Department of Justice press release reveal that Alamoudi, the president of the American

Muslim Council, was arrested at Dulles Airport in September 2003 upon returning to the U.S. after participating in a Libyan plot to assassinate the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. “Alamoudi participated in recruiting participants for this plot by introducing the Libyans to two Saudi dissidents in London and facilitating the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars of cash from the Libyans to those dissidents to finance the plot,” the release said.

According to the DOJ press release, Alamoudi, a naturalized citizen, pled guilty to three federal offenses: One count of violating the International Emergency Powers Act; One count of false statements made in his application for naturalization; A tax offense involving a long-term scheme to conceal from the IRS his financial transactions with Libya and his foreign bank accounts and to omit material information from the tax returns filed by his charities.

It is important to point out that Alamoudi’s ties to terrorist groups were no secret prior to his arrest.

Alamoudi spoke at an October 2000 rally in front of the White House in support of Hamas and Hezbollah during the period he was represented by Norquist’s firm, according to Senate lobbying disclosure records. The “Rally Against Israeli Aggression” was sponsored by Norquist’s Islamic Free Market Institute, according to a September 2000 “Islamic Institute Friday Brief.” The Islamic Free Market Institute was created by Grover Norquist and operated out of his Americans for Tax Reform office in Washington, thanks to sizable start-up contributions from Alamoudi, according to a March 11, 2003, article in the *St. Petersburg Times* by Mary Jacoby.

I have seen video from the rally, where Alamoudi roared from the stage:

“I have been labeled by the media in New York to be a supporter of Hamas, anybody supports Hamas here?”

[Crowd cheers, “Yes!”]

“ . . . Hear that, Bill Clinton, we are all supporters of Hamas, Allahu Akbar.”

“I wish they added that I am also a supporter of Hezbollah. Anybody supports Hezbollah here?”

[Crowd cheers, “Yes!”]

A few months after the Lafayette Park rally, Alamoudi was photographed in Beirut at a conference attended by representatives of the terror groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and al-Qaida, also according to the March 2003 *St. Petersburg Times* article.

In addition to Alamoudi’s outspoken support for Hamas and Hezbollah, he expressed private support for the 1994 terrorist attack against a synagogue in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which killed 85 people and injured hundreds, according to a December 17, 2003, article in *The American Spectator* by Shawn Macomber, who reported: “In a wiretapped conversation made public in the recent criminal complaint, he (Alamoudi) praises a 1994 bombing in Buenos Aires. ‘The Jewish Community Center. It is a worthy operation,’ Alamoudi tells an unidentified man, in Arabic. ‘I think that the attacks that are being executed by bin Laden and other Islamic groups are wrong, especially hitting the civilian targets. Many African Muslims have died and not a single American has died. I prefer to hit a Zionist target in America or Europe . . . I prefer honestly like what happened in Argentina.’”

According to a June 11, 2003, *Wall Street Journal* article by reporters Tom Hamburger

and Glenn Simpson, around 1999 Alamoudi sent his deputy at the American Muslim Council, Khaled Saffuri, to work directly for Mr. Norquist to establish the Islamic Free Market Institute—one of the groups that sponsored the October 2000 rally in Lafayette Park. The institute, chaired by Norquist and led by Saffuri, operated out of the Americans for Tax Reform offices here in Washington, according to the March 2003 article in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee report revealed that Saffuri was closely tied to Mr. Norquist and the Abramoff scandal and received money from Abramoff and a front group, the American International Center (AIC), to partner with Abramoff’s firm Greenberg Traurig on his “Malaysian-related interests and issues.”

Mr. Norquist also associated with terror financier Sami Al-Arian, according to Mary Jacoby’s reporting in March 2003, in the *St. Petersburg Times*. Al-Arian pled guilty in 2006 “to a charge of conspiring to provide services to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a specially designated terrorist organization, in violation of U.S. law,” and is under house arrests, according to a Department of Justice press release. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s “paramilitary wing—the al-Quds Brigades—has conducted numerous attacks, including large-scale suicide bombings,” according to the National Counterterrorism Center,

Who is Sami al-Arian? An October 2003 federal affidavit noted that Al-Arian had longstanding connections to associates of al Qaeda. According to the affidavit, “Sheik Rahman (the ‘Blind Sheik’) visited Al-Arian at his residence in Tampa and spoke at his mosque.” Rahman is currently serving a life sentence in U.S. prison for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center attack and additional terror plots. The federal affidavit also disclosed Al-Arian’s ties with Alamoudi.

Al-Arian’s relationship with Mr. Norquist appears to have spanned several years. Prior to his arrest in February 2003, Sami Al-Arian visited Norquist’s office in Washington for a meeting, also reported in the June 11, 2003, article in the *Wall Street Journal*. According to Continetti, Mr. Al-Arian also “cc’d Norquist on an e-mail he sent to the *Wall Street Journal* protesting an editorial that had pointed out his terrorist connections.”

Mr. Norquist himself served as a key facilitator between Al-Arian, Alamoudi and the White House, according to Mary Jacoby’s reporting in March 2003 in *The St. Petersburg Times*. She reported that “In June 2001, Al-Arian was among the members of the American Muslim Council invited to the White House complex. . . . The next month, the National Coalition to Protect Political Freedom—a civil liberties group headed by Al-Arian—gave Norquist an award for his work to abolish the use of secret intelligence evidence in terrorism cases.”

OPPOSING THE PATRIOT ACT

Mr. Norquist also has been an outspoken supporter of Al-Arian’s effort to end the use of classified evidence in terror trials. In fact, Norquist was scheduled to lead a delegation to the White House on September 11, 2001, that included a convicted felon and some who would later be identified by federal law enforcement as suspected terrorist financiers.

According to a Arab American Institute 2002 report, “Healing the Nation,” “[o]n the day of

the terrorist attacks, Arab American and Muslim American leaders were already in Washington, D.C. for a previously scheduled meeting with President Bush to discuss the use of 'secret evidence' in certain immigration proceedings and racial profiling of Arab Americans at the nation's airports and security checkpoints."

I have seen the list of attendees for the scheduled meeting. Among those listed:

Madhi Bray, a convicted felon who was found guilty of drug and fraud charges in the 1980s. Bray appeared cheering on stage with Alamoudi at the October 2000 rally in Lafayette Park as Alamoudi declared his support for Hamas and Hezbollah.

Omar Ahmed, co-founder of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). According to an April 18, 2011, Politico article by Josh Gerstein, "Federal prosecutors . . . have introduced evidence in court of Ahmad's attendance at a 1993 meeting in Philadelphia that the FBI contends was a gathering of Hamas supporters seeking to undermine the Middle East peace process. Prosecutors [in the Holy Land Foundation case] have also presented documents that appear to show CAIR as part of a network of Muslim Brotherhood organizations in the U.S."

The list provided to the White House by Norquist's Islamic Institute included representatives from each of Norquist's organizations, including a Janus-Meritt lobbyist. At the top of the list: Grover Norquist, representing Americans for Tax Reform.

According to a June 11, 2003, Wall Street Journal article by reporters Tom Hamburger and Glenn Simpson, "Mr. Norquist helped secure a promise from presidential candidate Bush to moderate federal policy on investigating suspected illegal immigrants. In a nationally televised debate on Oct. 11, 2000, Mr. Bush said: 'Arab-Americans are racially profiled in what's called secret evidence . . . We've got to do something about that.' Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the White House has abandoned that promise, as the Justice Department has aggressively pursued prosecutions of Muslims allegedly supporting terrorism."

Mr. Norquist has also led efforts over the last decade to weaken and repeal the PATRIOT Act, working closely with liberal groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, according to a February 20, 2008, profile on Norquist in the Washington Examiner, "A former lobbyist with the American Civil Liberties Union said privately that Norquist won her over when they joined forces to oppose the Bush administration's Patriot Act and warrantless wiretapping. 'I was initially skeptical,' she said, 'but I knew there was common ground on this issue and that we would be most powerful if we united.'"

GUANTANAMO BAY DETAINEES

More recently, Mr. Norquist has become an outspoken advocate for moving Guantanamo Bay detainees to the United States. According to a November 16, 2009, Huffington Post article by Sam Stein, Norquist led a public campaign to undermine Republican-led efforts to block the Obama Administration's transfer of 9/11 mastermind Khaled Sheik Mohammed to New York City and other terrorist detainees to Thompson Prison in Illinois, the first time terrorists would be held indefinitely inside the United States.

The article reported that Mr. Norquist wrote that, "moving suspected terrorists to the

Thomson, Illinois prison facility, 'makes good sense.' Taxpayers, [Norquist wrote], have already invested \$145 million in the facility, which has been 'little used.' The scare-mongering about these issues should stop,' [Norquist wrote], noting that there is 'absolutely no reason to fear that prisoners will escape or be released into their communities.'

Why is Mr. Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, advocating for one of President Obama's top campaign promises? His efforts fly in the face of near-unanimous congressional opposition to providing al Qaeda terrorists with civilian trials in U.S. courts.

GROUND ZERO MOSQUE

Mr. Norquist also interjected himself into the debate about the proposed "Ground Zero Mosque" last summer, calling legitimate concerns about the location a "Monica Lewinsky ploy" by Republicans, according to an August 18, 2010, report by Michael Scherer on Time magazine's Web site. Mr. Norquist further trivialized the concerns saying that Republicans were, "distracted by shiny things."

Mr. Norquist even used Americans for Tax Reform to circulate a petition in support of the "Ground Zero Mosque." Patrick Gleason, director of state affairs for Americans for Tax Reform, wrote an August 17, 2010, letter to state affiliates urging them to share the petition with their coalition.

Why would Americans for Tax Reform circulate a petition in support of the "Ground Zero Mosque?" For the families of those who lost loved ones on 9/11 or during operations in the War on Terror, concerns about the "Ground Zero Mosque" were neither a ploy nor a distraction, as Norquist described it.

FANNIE MAE

Some also may not be aware of Mr. Norquist's lobbying for Fannie Mae. Lobbying disclosure records indicate that Norquist's lobbying firm, Janus-Meritt Strategies, also lobbied for the massive government sponsored enterprise that required a large federal bailout.

According to a May 18, 2011, report by Erick Erickson on the conservative Web site, Red State, "in 2000, Janus Meritt received \$120,000 in lobbying fees from Fannie Mae. Mr. Norquist, along with [David] Safavian, was listed as one of the main lobbyists on the Fannie Mae account. In disclosure records, Janus-Meritt says its lobbying activities related to a 'Home ownership tax.' It appears this lobbying work was designed to protect the homeownership tax credit, which [Fannie Mae executive] Franklin Raines described as key to 'increase homeownership in urban and rural areas.' As many conservatives believe, this credit, which Mr. Norquist and Safavian apparently defended, was a major contributing factor in the housing bubble and mortgage crisis."

INTERNET GAMBLING AND CASINOS

Mr. Norquist also has a long history of lobbying to spread Internet gambling. According to public lobbying disclosure reports, Norquist's clients at Janus-Meritt included a variety of gambling organizations, including the Interactive Gaming Council, organized to oppose the Republican-led effort to pass the Internet Gambling Prohibition Act. It is also worth noting that the Interactive Gaming Council was made up of online poker companies, including Full Tilt Poker, which was shut down by the FBI in April and is described by the Justice Department as a "massive Ponzi scheme."

As recently as January 2011, Senate lobby disclosure forms show that Mr. Norquist continues to lobby on expanding Internet poker issues in his capacity as president of Americans for Tax Reform. Why would Mr. Norquist and ATR have an interest in lobbying to overturn the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act?

The Washington Times reported on September 21, 2011, that "critics of expanded gambling worry that legalizing online poker will increase gambling addiction and its fallout, such as divorces, bankruptcies and suicides. 'People may not understand how highly addictive it is, when you're alone in your home,' said Jerry Prosapio, co-founder of Gambling Exposed and a self-confessed gambling addict who quit 28 years ago. 'Online gambling is just another way you're going to create more addiction and then you're going to see more crime. It's just no good for America.'"

Mr. Norquist also took money from other gambling interests, like the Venetian Casino Resort, according to a March 31, 2006, article by Michael Kranish in the Boston Globe.

I think it is fair to ask: whose bidding is Grover Norquist doing? Why would Americans for Tax Reform take such a longstanding interest in proliferating gambling in the United States?

TRIAL LAWYERS

That same 2006 Boston Globe article reported that, "interviews and copies of Norquist's donor lists, obtained by the Globe, show that contributors include an array of special interests ranging from tobacco companies to Indian tribes to a Las Vegas casino. The biggest surprise is Norquist's largest individual donor: Richard 'Dickie' Scroggs, a Democratic Mississippi trial lawyer, who contributed \$4.3 million. Scroggs had received a \$1 billion fee in the landmark tobacco case against the same tobacco companies that were also Norquist's donors."

The Globe reported that, "Scroggs, like the tobacco companies and some other leading donors, was interested in more than lifting the burdens of the taxpayer. He said he had his own agenda: He wanted Norquist to work to defeat a congressional proposal that he feared would confiscate most of his \$1 billion legal fee in the tobacco case." In 2008, Scroggs pled guilty to trying to bribe a judge and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Why would Mr. Norquist, a self-proclaimed conservative leader, take so much money to represent a major Democrat party donor and advocate for trial lawyers? Mr. Scroggs himself provided one answer, describing Mr. Norquist in the Globe article, "There is an expression, if you need a thief, take him from the gallows."

INSULTING FORMER PRESIDENTS

My colleagues may also be surprised at the tenor and arrogance of Mr. Norquist's public attacks on fellow Republican leaders. In an October 2011 piece he authored in the American Spectator, Norquist personally insults two former Republican presidents and a former Republican majority leader and presidential candidate.

Writing about former President George H.W. Bush's decision to break the tax pledge during his term, Norquist lashed out at Bush saying, "Now, no person's life is a complete waste. Some serve as bad examples."

Former President George H.W. Bush is an honorable man who dedicated his life to public service as a congressman, ambassador, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and

vice president before being elected president. As president he oversaw the end of the Cold War and led the successful liberation of Kuwait. He is also an American hero who enlisted in the U.S. Navy after Pearl Harbor and nearly lost his life after being shot down by the Japanese.

While acknowledging former President George W. Bush's adherence to the pledge, Norquist still makes an indecorous allusion about the president, writing, "He may invade countries he cannot pronounce or find on a map, but he will not raise taxes."

Former President George W. Bush also is an honorable man who served two successful terms as governor of Texas before twice being elected president. He rallied our nation following 9/11 attacks and led sweeping efforts to secure our homeland and disrupt al Qaeda, preventing further terrorist attacks on U.S. soil during his term.

Norquist also boasts of sinking Bob Dole's 1988 presidential campaign, gloating, "Delaware governor Pete du Pont explained that all the other [Republican primary] candidates had signed the pledge and challenged Dole to do so also, offering the pledge to Dole, who visibly recoiled, as if a vampire being tossed a cross. Dole subsequently lost New Hampshire."

Former Senator Dole, too, is an honorable man who served his country as a senator and Republican presidential candidate. Dole also is an American hero who fought in World War II and suffered serious injury from Axis gunfire, leaving his arm paralyzed.

MOVING FORWARD

I believe many people were unaware of these troubling connections that I have spoken about. I was surprised when this information came to my attention. I also understand that some may not agree with what I have said in this speech.

But as William Wilberforce, the British parliamentarian and abolitionist, famously told his colleagues, "Having heard all of this, you may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."

I can no longer be silent. I believe the evidence is clear that Grover Norquist is connected with a number of unsavory people and groups out of the mainstream. I also believe he has exploited "the pledge" to the point of being elevated at times by the media as a spokesman for the Republican Party.

How can we ever hope to move our country forward and solve our debt problem if we are paralyzed by a pledge and threats of political retribution for breaking it by someone whose dealings in Washington over several decades have raised serious questions of impropriety? No one should be able to singularly hold Congress hostage with veto power over candidates for public office; above all someone with such troubling associations.

As former Senator Alan Simpson, who chaired the Bowles-Simpson deficit reduction commission, said in an August 7, 2011, interview with Newsweek "What can [Norquist] do to you? He's not gonna murder you. He won't burn your house. The only thing he can do is defeat you for reelection. If your reelection means more than doing something for the United States of America and getting out of this [debt] hole, then you shouldn't be in Congress."

Barbara Shelly, editorial writer for the Kansas City Star, wrote on July 11, 2011: "Wash-

ington, we know, is a planet unto itself. But here in the heartland, it's surreal to watch an unelected guy with a broken ethical compass bring the capital to a standstill and thwart the spirit of compromise that the majority of Americans say they want. Who elected Grover Norquist? He did, that's who. And Washington's political class has not the shame, nor the spine, to send him packing."

As I observe the hardened ideological positions gripping Washington that threaten our nation's future, my conscience has compelled me to share these concerns and provide this information for all to consider.

The American people want us to resolve this debt crisis and they have every right to expect us to follow through. Congress and the president must reach a solution that will bring confidence to the country. This place is dysfunctional and the American people see it. They want action.

I believe we must: (A) reaffirm ourselves to free America of the incredible debt burden that saddles the coming generations; and (B) break loose of not only Mr. Norquist, but any other special interest holding us hostage.

We also need to be honest with the American people and explain that we cannot just solve our nation's financial crisis by cutting waste, fraud and abuse within discretionary accounts. The real runaway spending is occurring in our out-of-control entitlement costs and the hundreds of billions in annual tax earmarks in our tax code. Until we reach an agreement that addresses these two drivers of our deficit and debt, we cannot right our fiscal ship of state.

Some are speculating that our country has gone too far to recover. I emphatically reject that notion. Americans have a spirit and sense of civic duty which was implanted in us from the beginning of this republic. It was this sense that Tocqueville most noticed. He called it the great republican virtue of America—ordinary citizens willing to do the hard work of citizenship, helping their neighbors, sacrificing for the common good, and building a better future for our kids. That's been the hallmark of America.

Have we lost this? I don't think so. We may be tempted to veer off course at times, but America is the same nation filled with the same dedicated, patriotic, God-loving, God-fearing people who carved this nation out a wilderness, and have made it an extraordinary beacon of hope and light in the world like none before it.

The problem in the country is not with the people. The problem in the country is Washington. The system is broken because we have fallen prey to ideologues that have put us in a straight jacket and threaten our futures. I believe we can and will break free because the seriousness of the times demands it.

I am one who believes America's greatest days are still ahead. All we have to do is recover that sense of virtue and duty, and be bold and brave enough to stand up and speak the truth and be true to our conscience.

AN ANNIVERSARY NOT TO CELEBRATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, this week marks an anniversary we must acknowledge, but that we certainly cannot celebrate. This Friday, we will have spent 10 years at war in Afghanistan. We will have spent a decade fighting a war that the American people no longer support. The sobering 10th anniversary is the time for reflection—reflection on how our world has changed in the last 10 years.

□ 1020

This war has consumed an unjustifiable amount of our financial treasure, led to an unprecedented burden on our servicemembers, and changed forever how an entire generation of young people views the world.

This anniversary is the time to reflect on the choices we've made and their impact on the world. Ten years later, we are still building war machines that have the potential to cause devastating harm to innocent people around the world. Ten years later, many of our Nation's best and brightest are coming home with scars, both physical and mental, that they and their families will live with forevermore.

The numbers are against us. After a decade at war, we still have 90,000 soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. More than 1,800 Americans have died. Our Nation has spent \$460 billion on an unwinnable war, and tens of thousands of innocent Afghans and Iraqis have been killed. It is well past the time for us to end this.

In remembering the last 10 years, we must think of the future. My five grandchildren are now part of a generation that has grown up without knowing what it's like to live in a country at peace. Over the past 10 years, we've led our world down a path towards war rather than fighting for peace, rather than fighting for a smarter security plan.

The American people and the global community see the error in our policy, and we are facing increasing scrutiny from our international partners. In fact, not one other government agrees with the U.S.' use of drones. In fact, our European allies have never supported the U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Instead of heeding their calls, we are expanding the use of this deadly force, creating automatic drones that have the potential to cause unchecked devastation.

I have spoken from this spot 407 times, as you all know because you've heard me so many times, in support of SMART Security—an approach for an end to the war. And I am not alone. I've been joined by colleagues on both sides of the aisle and have been supported by Americans across the country to call for an end of our war and the return of our troops. That's exactly what my SMART Security plan is about—making military force a last resort and, instead, directing our energy and our resources toward diplomacy, democracy promotion, development